

BRANDED CONTENT

APRIL 3, 2023

LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL

DIVERSITY, EQUITY + INCLUSION

Symposium & Awards

2023

THE 2023 HONOREES & FINALISTS

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Letter from the Publisher



The Los Angeles Business Journal was proud to host our annual Diversity, Equity + Inclusion Symposium & Awards on March 29th at the JW Marriott Los Angeles at LA Live.

During the event, our morning of panel conversations featured industry experts discussing the many ways our Community of Business can advance diversity in the workplace while simultaneously creating an environment that enables equity and inclusion to thrive.

Panels included:

THE COST OF INEQUITY

KeAndra D. Cylear-Dodds, Executive Officer, Equity and Race, LA Metro

Kymerly Garrett, Chief People & Diversity Officer, Children's Bureau

Megan O'Neill, Founding Partner and Chair of Litigation, DTO Law

Moderator: **Laura Mitchel**, District Senior Manager, Wells Fargo Bank

BUILDING A DIVERSE & MULTI-GENERATIONAL WORKFORCE

Tanya Greene, Partner, McGuireWoods

Leticia Kimble, Partner, Raines Feldman

Dr. Mashi Rahmani, CEO, MMChr

Robert Sausedo, President & CEO, Community Build, Inc.

Moderator: **Lois Shelton**, CSUN Professor of Management, CSUN

WHAT'S REALLY WORKING: JOURNEY TO SUCCESS

Andrés De La Peza, Director of Strategy, Partner Relations, Woodcraft Rangers

Rose Madriaga, Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Pacific West, Optum

Laura Mitchel, District Senior Manager, Wells Fargo Bank

Quentin Strode, President and CEO, NEW Community Investments

Moderator: **Karen Fairey**, Marketing Communications Manager & Senior Public Involvement Specialist, HNTB Corp.

After the thought-provoking panels concluded, the afternoon luncheon followed, honoring diversity, inclusion, and equity champions in the Los Angeles region for their ongoing efforts to advance diversity and inclusion in the workplace and business leadership while simultaneously creating an equitable environment.

It was truly a privilege to shine the spotlight on these terrific leaders and organizations within the Los Angeles business community and unveil our honorees for this year's awards.

This special section contains profiles of all the honorees and finalists, alongside articles and features about best practices and the tremendous benefits of diversity, inclusion and equity programs and efforts in the workplace.

Many thanks to our sponsors, including Diamond Sponsors **HNTB** and **Wells Fargo**, and Platinum Sponsors **CSUN**, **NEW Community Investments** and **Optum**, who helped make this event possible. And once again, congratulations to the honorees – Los Angeles based professionals and organizations who “lead by example,” successfully blending effective business vision with a passionate commitment to positively making a difference, furthering diversity, inclusion and equity both in the world of business and in the communities they serve.

Best regards,

Josh Schimmels
Publisher & CEO

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Evelyn, MHALA member and advocate.

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Celebrating our differences

Our unique experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives help shape how we approach the world and those around us. When we acknowledge those differences and understand how they bring us together, we all have cause to celebrate.

Wells Fargo is proud to celebrate the Los Angeles Business Journal 2023 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Honorees.

wellsfargo.com/donations


CEO OF THE YEAR (LARGE OR MIDSIZED COMPANY) HONOREE

JENNA KNUDSEN

Managing Principal
CO Architects

Jenna Knudsen, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, is the youngest-ever managing principal at CO Architects, a firm founded in 1986 in Los Angeles. She is also its first female leader. Early in her career at CO, Knudsen was instrumental in transitioning the firm from Computer-Aided Design (CAD) to Building Information Modeling (BIM).

Throughout her career, Knudsen has championed diversity in architecture. In response to George Floyd's death, she led CO's staff in creating a J.E.D.I. (Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion) program. J.E.D.I. provides a forum to ensure that all voices feel equally involved in and supported at CO's diverse workplace, particularly during the firm's temporary transition to remote working. In the highly collaborative architecture profession, a diverse and inclusive environment is vital to creating a sense of belonging and promoting connections among co-workers and on projects.

J.E.D.I. is the most recent initiative Knudsen spearheaded to improve inclusion and minority representation in architecture. In 2010, she co-founded (and still leads) Women of CO, an internal group that holds monthly meetings devoted to mentorship, professional development, and career advancement for the firm's female employees. The group's goals include promoting more women to senior positions, expanding staffing roles, and supporting work-life integration and employee well-being.

As a mentor of students, Knudsen helped create CO's Architecture Discovery program in 2013. This four-week summer internship was initially for female STEAM students from Marymount High School. It has since expanded to include minority students from multiple schools. The program allows students to shadow architects, visit jobsites, and create an end-of-term project with guidance from CO's staff.



RICHARD AYOUB
FINALIST
CEO
Project Angel Food

Richard Ayoub joined Project Angel Food in May 2016 after serving as interim executive director for six months. During his tenure at Project Angel Food, he has more than doubled the amount of clients served from 1,050 to 2,300 a day. Now he is leading the charge to expand client services inside Project Angel Food. He has invested in grant writing and signing the organization up to help partner on pilot health focused projects throughout California. His staff is over 50% minority-based and it aligns with the diversity in clientele they serve.

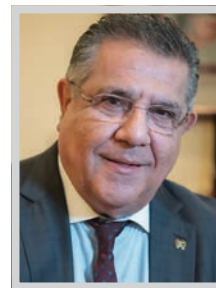
Recently, under Ayoub's leadership, Project Angel Food was able to purchase a piece of land and real estate right next to the HQ so the charity can expand in kitchen space, volunteer space and more. He is known as an energetic force who exemplifies what it is to lead with love and a spirit of inclusion.



JAY CATLIN
FINALIST
CEO
AMS Fulfillment

In 2002, Jay Catlin took over operational responsibilities for his father's packaged media company. His first order of business: form a new fulfillment entity to assemble products and displays, warehouse and manage finished goods inventory, fulfill orders to hundreds of retailers across the US, and process returns. Advantage Media Services (AMS) was formed, and after a year, Catlin began to convert AMS into a multi-client pure-play third-party fulfillment entity.

With the help of a diverse team, AMS grew into a true impact player in the world of third party fulfillment, operating each day in a family-like culture that emphasizes client and employee satisfaction, community involvement and environmental awareness. Catlin has demonstrated a firm commitment to stay true to his B Corporation values by giving his time and energy towards the goals and objectives that are meaningful to the employees, the community and the planet.



MASHI RAHMANI
FINALIST
CEO
MMChr

Dr. Mashi Rahmani is the CEO and founder of MMC, a leading HRO (human resources outsourcing) firm located in Beverly Hills. In his book, *Garden of Delight*, Dr. Rahmani introduces a new concept in leadership management.

Dr. Rahmani compares a loving and diligent leadership to that of a gardener that nurtures the plants and fruits that flourish in a healthy garden. He illustrates the message that humans too experience this coming of age in our own personal growth when choosing to do what is right, what is fair, and what is in the best interest of all people. Integrating this concept at MMC, Dr. Rahmani champions diversity and inclusion by maintaining a structured leadership of highly qualified individuals from varying backgrounds. Today, MMC upholds a predominately female leadership and has made steps toward building a strong feedback culture that gives MMC the ability to make a positive impact.



KUNAL SHAH
FINALIST
President, CEO
PBS Engineers

Kunal Shah's core philosophy, which mirrors the mission of PBS, is to provide an exceptional level of service. He approaches his work as a "servant leader" by enriching the lives of individuals, building better organizations and helping to create a more just and caring world.

PBS is certified as a Minority Business Enterprise and is committed to providing career opportunities for those with diverse backgrounds ensuring support to perform to the fullest of their abilities. Inclusion, acceptance, and equality is all part of the cultural fabric at PBS Engineers. Under Shah's leadership, PBS has fortified its mission to 'Provide WOW Through Service.' This unwavering focus on culture and the PBS family has allowed the company to have consistent growth. Of the 97 employees, and growing, PBS has a diverse mix of employees—all from various cultural backgrounds that share a belief in the PBS core values.

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CEO OF THE YEAR (GROWING COMPANY) HONOREE

MELANIE STRICKLAN

Co-Founder & CEO
Slingshot Aerospace

Melanie Stricklan spent 21 years in the United States Air Force (USAF), where she amassed a range of accolades for commanding experimental spacecraft missions and leading the development of space control technologies for the Department of Defense. Following her USAF retirement, she co-founded Slingshot Aerospace in 2017 to create a safer environment for commercial, civil and defense space organizations.

Recognizing her leadership in the industry, Stricklan was selected by Vice President Kamala Harris to join the National Space Council's Users Advisory Group. She was also approved by U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg to join the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)'s Commercial Space Transportation Advisory Committee.

In a traditionally male-dominated space industry, Stricklan embodies the idea that diversity starts at the top. At Slingshot, 50% of the executive team represent diverse groups. With a keen focus on ensuring diversity at Slingshot Aerospace and within the industry at large, Stricklan embraced the opportunity to be one of the select few inaugural companies in the space industry to sign the first-of-its-kind Space Workforce 2030 Pledge. The Pledge is designed to advance diversity across the collective space workforce and it was announced publicly at the 2022 Space Symposium, the premier event of the space industry. As a signatory of the pledge, Slingshot publicly commits to reporting data on diversity annually, to regularly sharing best practices, and to working with universities to identify and increase the number of diverse and underrepresented students graduating who are ready to join the space industry.



DR. APOLLO EMEKA

FINALIST
Founder/CEO
Apollo Strategy Group, Inc.

Challenging assumptions about the pathway to success, Apollo Emeka started out as a 4th-grade drop-out and grew into the entrepreneurial and motivational force of nature that he is today. Dr. Emeka continuously took unconventional and sometimes counterintuitive steps to achieve success.

Few who knew childhood Apollo would have thought he would go on to earn a doctorate, be an FBI intelligence analyst, join the U.S. Army Special Forces, or become a successful serial entrepreneur. He's accomplished all of those feats and more while helping the people he encountered along his journey elevate their own ambitions and outcomes. During his twenty-year military career, Dr. Emeka learned that genuine collaboration is easiest when people intentionally embrace each other's differences. He drew on his lived experiences to develop the core philosophies of Apollo Strategy Group, including an explicit recognition of the centrality of diversity and inclusion to personal and business success.



LASHANA LEWIS

FINALIST
CEO & Founder
L. M. Lewis Consulting

L. M. Lewis Consulting's expertise is in DEI Consulting. The organization was founded after LaShana Lewis, a Black woman in tech, was consistently put into the role of DEI leader at the companies she was working for. After consistently being asked to speak on DEI topics and to help her organizations reach more diverse candidates, she decided to turn it into a career. She's worked with organizations, including Microsoft and Amazon, to learn more about DEI initiatives and practices, and she's helped nonprofits create entire DEI manifestos for their teams.

Lewis is a Black, queer leader dedicated to educating the public on seeing the merits of other educational and career pathways outside of a bachelor's degree. To help, she's recently launched a campaign with Opportunity@Work and the Ad Council, called the "Tear the Paper Ceiling" campaign, which she currently stars in.



TANA M. SESSION

FINALIST
Organizational Development & DEIB Strategist;
Founder & CEO
TanaMSession.com

Dr. Tana M. Session is the CEO and founder of TanaMSession.com, a certified Women Minority Business Enterprise with over 30 years of HR experience. Dr. Session specializes in cultural engineering, facilitated experiences and leadership and organizational development.

Dr. Session has spent 10 years as the top human resources executive for both domestic and international organizations where she led various change initiatives and up-leveled entire departments, including talent, systems and infrastructure. Her experience has enabled her to embed her passion for diversity, equality & inclusion in everything she develops and implements. In 2022, Dr. Session was the keynote speaker for LinkedIn's inaugural Recruiter Reunion Conference, where she shared real world examples on how organizations can increase their efforts in diverse recruiting and retention. She has also spoken at the Senior Executive Leadership Summit sponsored by President Joe Biden.



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DEI EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR (ENTERPRISE OR LARGE COMPANY)
HONOREE

MEDELL BRIGGS-MALONSON

Chief of Health Equity, Diversity and Inclusion for the UCLA Hospital and Clinic System
UCLA Health

Dr. Medell Briggs-Malonson, MD, MPH, MSHS is the chief of health equity, diversity and inclusion for the UCLA Hospital and Clinic System. She is also an associate professor of emergency medicine at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. She is responsible for the implementation and oversight of organizational structures and initiatives that promote inclusivity and equity among UCLA Health staff, patients, and communities.

During her tenure as Chief of Health Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Dr. Briggs-Malonson has been instrumental in making sure that UCLA Health incorporates equity into the values and practices of UCLA Health. She helped to design UCLA Health's vaccine distribution model to ensure equitable access based on social vulnerability. In addition, she led a team of multidisciplinary professionals to design and implement an extensive three-part required training for all 32,000 staff, faculty, and learners to understand and combat racism, microaggressions, and implicit biases in the work and clinical space.

Dr. Briggs-Malonson also implemented new policies, reporting structures, and review teams to address allegations of discriminatory behavior. To promote greater representation within the workforce, Dr. Briggs-Malonson helped to redefine the search committees for organizational leaders to ensure appropriate membership representation and to assess each candidate's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Under Dr. Briggs-Malonson's direct leadership, UCLA Health launched the new Homeless Healthcare Collaborative, which deployed medically equipped vans throughout Los Angeles to care for people experiencing homelessness. Since its launch in January 2020, the Homeless Healthcare Collaborative has accrued over 6,000 encounters providing health care and social service referrals throughout Los Angeles county.

Congratulations

We celebrate Child Care Resource Center as an honoree for the Los Angeles Business Journal as they celebrate being honored as the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Nonprofit Organization of the Year!

CCRC supports and inspires diversity, equity, and inclusion in both the workplace and in the communities that we serve.

DEI is integrated into services for children, families, child care providers and staff including:

- Offering interpretation services and translated information for families
- Creating a safe and inclusive classroom setting
- Launching a 2023-2025 DEI Strategic plan agency-wide to hold us accountable for our equity efforts
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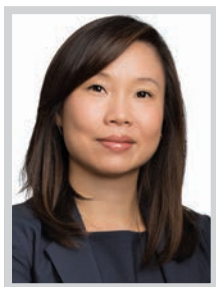
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LILLY D. ACUÑA
FINALIST
SPARK LA Program Leader
HNTB Corporation

Throughout her career, Lilly Acuña has made an impact in communities globally. Currently, she serves as the SPARK LA program leader for HNTB Corporation in the firm's Los Angeles headquarters and has worked with the program since 2018.

But it's not in just her own backyard that Acuña is demonstrating grassroots inclusivity and equity; she has been involved as a volunteer twice with the United States Peace Corps. She was determined to make an investment in the world and worked in Paraguay and Guatemala at a grassroots level to create change. She served as part of an 11-member volunteer team that built a 45-meter pedestrian suspension bridge over the Rio Trinidad in rural Panama. The bridge connected the more than 200 residents of the villages of La Conga and La Florida, providing a safe and efficient crossing with access to schools, local markets, health facilities and jobs.



CHERYL CHANG
FINALIST
Partner
Blank Rome LLP

Cheryl Chang is Blank Rome's first female Asian-American partner, vice chair of the firm's nearly 50-member Financial Institution Litigation and Regulatory Compliance practice group, and co-chair of the more than 60-member Los Angeles office. Fluent in spoken Mandarin Chinese, Taiwanese, and French, she often communicates with her clients, and negotiates with adversaries, in multiple languages.

An early champion of diversity, equity, and inclusion, Chang has served as co-chair of BR United, a firm affinity group forum for diverse attorneys and professionals to network and exchange ideas, since 2012. She has led BR United and Blank Rome in discussions that explored difficult topics and proposed strategies to improve firm culture, awareness, and action in light of social injustice and racial violence.



ADRIAN GONZALEZ
FINALIST
Captain
City of Los Angeles

Captain Adrian Gonzalez is a native Angeleno who has served his country in the Marine Corps. In 1998, he joined the LAPD working assignments including patrol, narcotics, vice, and field training officer. He has now dedicated over 25 years to the City of Los Angeles and has demonstrated selfless service to the community.

Captain Gonzalez has also displayed a commitment to ensuring that diversity, equity, and inclusion principles are a part of his leadership. He has recently created an award at South Bureau Homicide Division to highlight and recognize the work of the female investigators in the Division. The award also pays tribute to the first female homicide investigator for the Department, and the first investigator at South Bureau Homicide. Also, under Captain Gonzalez's leadership there is passion for providing closure to all victims, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity or class.



WAYNE GUZMAN
FINALIST
Director, Sales & Outreach
Inland Empire Health Plan

Wayne Guzman has been a long-time and steadfast champion of DEI in the insurance industry both in Los Angeles, and nationally. In July of 2020, he was appointed to chair and develop a national task force focused on evaluating the current DEI efforts of the National Association of Health Underwriters (NAHU, now NABIP) and to provide findings and recommendations to its NAHU Board of Trustees.

In September of 2020, through focused national collaboration, Guzman and the task force delivered recommendations that were adopted by NAHU and the NAHU DEI committee was established. Guzman was appointed as chairman of the new committee which is dedicated to providing diversity, equity and inclusion experiences that actively engage employees in learning from each other to mitigate unconscious bias, educate on racial injustice.



KEVIN JORDAN
FINALIST

SVP, Inclusion, Diversity & Community Outreach
Wedbush Securities

Kevin Jordan is the SVP, inclusion, diversity & community outreach at Wedbush Securities. He serves in this newly created position as the firm's subject matter expert as it relates to diversity and inclusion policy as well as internal and external initiatives. With over two decades of experience in client and colleague engagement with more than 14 years working specifically in diversity and inclusion, Jordan joined Wedbush Securities in 2021.

Jordan plans to bring his insights to Wedbush by creating firmwide workplace initiatives that foster inclusion and belonging and help its colleagues thrive in their careers. In his most recent role at ITW, Kevin led the global D&I strategy that included reframing the company's D&I narrative to help leaders and employees understand their role in fostering an inclusive company culture to accelerate progress towards diversity goals.



STEVEN RAMOS
FINALIST

Captain
City of Los Angeles

Captain Steven Ramos is currently the commanding officer for diversity, equity and inclusion division (DEID). At DEID, Captain Ramos oversees the OMBUDS Section, Community Engagement and Professional Development Section, and Racial and Identity Profiling Act (RIPA) Unit. In the OMBUDS Section, Captain Ramos assists with overseeing the diverse civilian and sworn employees cope with workplace issues such as personality conflicts, interpersonal conflicts, discrimination, general concerns of harassment, and difficult working conditions.

Captain Ramos also works to improve the Department's work environment for employees to achieve their personal and professional goals and receive training, tools, and resources they need to positively impact the communities they serve. Captain Ramos has led a team to develop the RIPA Data Dashboard, an advancement in transparency.



KATHERINE VINSON
FINALIST

Senior Vice President and Second Line of Defense
Enterprise Change Management Lead
City National Bank

Katherine Vinson is senior vice president and second line of defense enterprise change management (ECM) lead for City National Bank (CNB). She is responsible for the framework, policy and standards as well as oversight including risk-based independent review and challenge, independent testing, reporting and training. She has over 15 years' experience in financial institutions as a change leader and program director.

Vinson is the co-lead of City National Bank's LGBTQ Alliance Colleague Resource Group whose mission statement is "creating inclusivity through education, awareness and growth within our company and the communities we serve." Most recently, the LGBTQ Alliance produced the Personal and Professional Development Speed Networking event to partner colleagues with senior and executive leaders across the organization.



DEI EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR (MID-SIZED OR GROWING COMPANY)
HONOREE

NIONA RICH

Managing Director
Vaco

Niona Rich began her career in finance and accounting and is now a managing director at Vaco in Los Angeles, providing consulting, project resources, executive search, direct hire and strategic staffing with expertise in technology, finance and accounting, and operations.

In addition, Rich heads up Vaco’s nationwide efforts in inclusion, diversity, and equity. She created and helps lead Vaco’s Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (IDEC) Cabinet and Council. The IDEC is made up of 77 employees and its goal is to facilitate the identification of any issues and provide ideas for new initiatives and programs. Rich leads the steering committee and has generated several new programs and put key initiatives into action.

Under Rich’s leadership, Vaco expanded current programs and developed both formal and informal initiatives to address and improve diversity. Over the last few years, the company has worked to increase its emphasis and formalize its efforts and Rich’s leadership has been a huge part of the company’s acceleration and success in this arena.

Vaco recognizes the value of having a diverse team, among both internal and external teams and partners, to bring a broad range of perspectives from people with different backgrounds including gender, race, ethnicity, orientation, culture, and economic experiences, for continued growth as an organization.

Rich has led the expansion of existing programs and developed new initiatives, processes and training to draw the circle wider to broaden perspectives, connect on a deeper level and guide Vaco to be a force for positive change by building diversity and inclusion at the heart of its culture.

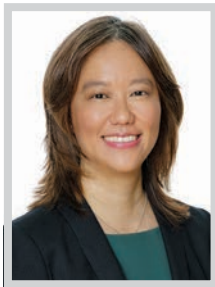


CONGRATULATES
VIVIAN KIM

Executive Vice President & Chief People Officer

Hanmi Bank congratulates Vivian Kim for being nominated as an Executive of The Year finalist for the Los Angeles Business Journal Diversity, Equity + Inclusion Awards.

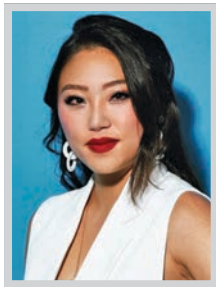




CAROL ALEXIS CHEN
FINALIST
Partner
Winston & Strawn LLP

Less than two years into her tenure with Winston, Carol Alexis Chen has already left an indelible mark on the firm’s practice and culture, especially in regard to promoting and fostering a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusivity. In her discussions with other Winston lawyers, Chen often cites her background as the first lawyer in her multi-generational immigrant family.

Chen is currently the global co-chair of the Winston Asian Leadership Initiative, the firm’s affinity group for AAPI lawyers, and works closely with Sylvia James, the chief diversity officer, and the Diversity & Inclusion Committee to hire, retain, and promote lawyers of AAPI descent and foster allyship across the firm’s affinity groups (the Black Lawyers Network, Latino/Latina Lawyers Alliance, Family Network, Winston Pride, and the Women’s Leadership Initiative) and the firm globally as a whole.



SHARON CHO
FINALIST
Vice President, DEI
Edelman

Sharon Cho is vice president of DEI and multicultural communications at Edelman, leading DEI advisory, crisis communications, DEI strategy and counsel for clients like Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, Microsoft, Chanel, GSK/Haleon, DIRECTV, McKinsey, Lindt, Planet Fitness, Tencent America, Kaiser Permanente, and many more. While she supports global clients, she supports local activities and DEI programming out of Edelman’s Los Angeles office.

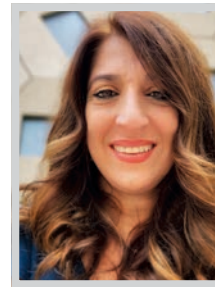
With ten years of DEI strategy, communications and training experience and as a certified DEI practitioner and instructional/executive coach, Cho’s expertise lives in the intersection of brand, business transformation, employee experience, multicultural marketing, and corporate advisory. Her day-to-day work includes DEI strategic development, DEI audit and reporting and DEI internal and external communications.



KATURI KAYE
FINALIST
DEI Director
Trucker Huss APC

As Trucker Huss’ inaugural DEI Director, Katuri Kaye oversees the implementation of the firm’s DEI initiative. In this capacity, she chairs the firm’s DEI Committee, provides vision, and thought leadership, and helps develop and facilitate strategies, policies, and programs supportive of efforts to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion at all levels at the firm. She also serves as the firm’s point person with external organizations.

Under her DEI leadership, the firm has developed a DEI Mission Statement and adopted its first DEI Billable Credit Program, a program that recognizes attorneys who are involved in the firm’s DEI initiative and provides credit for the work they do in this regard. As the DEI Director for the firm, Kaye facilitated a cultural shift within the firm with the inclusion of an expectation for all attorneys to participate in a meaningful way in the firm’s DEI efforts.



MARY KOHAV
FINALIST
Vice President - Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion
and Community Engagement
The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles

Mary Kohav brings extensive experience working in diverse communities and leading justice, equity, diversity and inclusion strategy, social impact and leadership programs. She has been at the forefront of fostering change across public, private and nonprofit sector organizations in Southern California for more than 25 years.

Currently, Kohav is vice president of JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion) and community engagement at the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles and also heads up Equicity Partners, developing equitable, inclusive and integrated solutions for civic, business and nonprofit organizations. A public speaker and published author, Kohav is a board member at Center for Powerful Public Schools and an alumni of The Jewish Federation’s Rautenberg New Leaders Project.

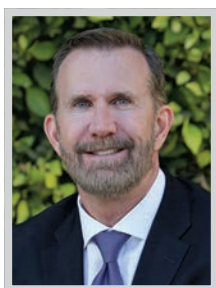


DIANNE LEE
FINALIST

Executive Director, Business Development and Strategy
Kitchell

Dianne Lee is a tireless advocate and construction industry professional in the architecture, engineering and construction marketplace. With more than 18 years of experience, she has been credited for multiple billion-dollar contract awards both nationally and internationally. She is a transformational leader with a robust portfolio of clients in the healthcare, education, aviation, and public agency sectors, having represented regional and global multi-national companies.

Lee utilizes her voice and her platform to advance Kitchell’s DEI initiatives. As a construction industry influencer, she highlights the contributions of women and minorities in a highly male dominated industry. She herself, has successfully conquered social and gender stereotypes in the construction industry and has consistently set an example for the next generation of minority women by creating a path for them.



BRADFORD POLLARD
FINALIST

Managing Director
Citi Private Bank

Bradford Pollard is a managing director and private banker of Citi Private Bank. He is responsible for providing tailored financial strategies to ultra-high net worth clients, endowments and foundations in the Western U.S. region. He is one of the largest producing bankers in Los Angeles and the Western region.

Bradford is uniquely positioned to inspire other LGBTQ+ leaders, especially those in client-facing roles, to live authentically and drive progress. He also serves LGBTQ+ individuals with customized private banking solutions to expand and preserve their wealth legacy. A Southern California native with 30+ years banking experience, he is committed to equity at the local and global level. Bradford co-founded two Pride Employee Resource Groups in Los Angeles (at ING and Citi) where none previously existed.



MARK SMALLS
FINALIST

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Consultant
JAMS

Mark Smalls has overseen JAMS marketing and communications strategy globally and provided leadership to the managers tasked with business development & DEI responsibilities for the last 13+ years. Beginning February 1st, he transitioned to the role of DEI consultant with JAMS as a client.

Smalls chaired the JAMS Diversity Committee at JAMS and has been widely recognized for his contributions to advance DEI initiatives. In 2021 he was honored with the CMO Equality Leadership Award by the CMO Club as part of their CMO Awards series. Smalls has helped JAMS lay the groundwork to make lasting change within the organization and in the alternative dispute resolution (ADR) industry. He created a new diversity program manager position dedicated to increasing diversity among the JAMS panel of neutrals and to being a leader in diversity and inclusion efforts.



COMMUNITY IMPACT AWARD (LARGE COMPANY) HONOREE

FERNANDO FLORES

Job Captain; Associate
Gensler

Fernando Flores is an associate and job captain at Gensler Los Angeles. Over his 17-year career (11 of which have been with Gensler), Flores has built a diverse portfolio and work experience on various project typologies including creative office design, laboratories, mixed-use, commercial office headquarters, building repositioning, and historic renovations. As job captain, Flores is involved in all phases of a project, from concept development through construction administration.

Flores has spent his professional career driving opportunities to mentor youth with a focus on underserved communities in Los Angeles encouraging individuals to get involved in their communities. In 2013 he joined as the lead coordinator for SPARK LA, a middle school mentorship program that is committed to creating opportunities that forge the gap between what they are learning in the classroom and what they dream to accomplish later in life. He passionately worked to expand mentor engagement in the Gensler LA office and beyond.

This year, Flores joined the ACE Mentor program, partnering with USC Hybrid High School as a mentor where he shares his experience and knowledge with students of color to learn about a career path in design.

Flores also served on the inaugural Race, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee for the Gensler LA office where he collaborated with his colleagues to develop the initial framework for Gensler's Strategies to Fight Racism. His leadership with the RDI team professionally established his dedication to promoting diversity, leading to the opportunity to lead the documentation and construction of the Office for the LA Civil + Human Rights and Equity Department.



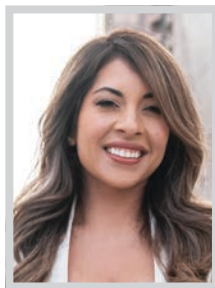
GLENN AGONCILLO

FINALIST

VP, Constituent Experience
HUB International

Glenn Agoncillo, who is VP of constituent experience for HUB International, has also served as co-chair of HUB International's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging committee for Los Angeles and Orange County, since 2020. He also founded the national HUB Pride Voices group last year and is an active member of the national HUB Asian Voices group.

Agoncillo's passion, focus and skills lie in his ability to imagine the possibilities of a more diverse, equitable and inclusive society. He gave up a role as a successful insurance broker to pursue his passion as a DEIB leader within HUB International's campus. In a short time and in addition to his day job, Agoncillo has founded two ERGs and spends a great deal of time on another. He's won various awards and has driven HUB's DEIB programs, which have opened the doors to the hiring of a more diverse and productive workforce.



ALEJANDRA ALANIS

FINALIST

ALPFA LA Vice President;
Risk Consulting Manager
RSM US LLP

Alejandra Alanis has more than nine years of experience working with both internal and external audit clients. She began her career in Deloitte Seattle and joined RSM US LLP in November of 2018. She specializes in internal audit Sarbanes-Oxley readiness projects within the life sciences and technology industries. She has assisted many clients go through their IPO.

Within a short period at RSM US LLP, Alanis took on the role of local leader and became part of the national steering committee for HOLA, the Hispanic employee network group. She was selected to serve a one-year term in the firm's CEO Action for Racial Equity Fellowship program, which began in September 2022. In this role, she works with fellows from other firms to identify, develop and promote scalable and sustainable public policies and corporate engagement strategies to advance racial equity and improve societal for the African American community.



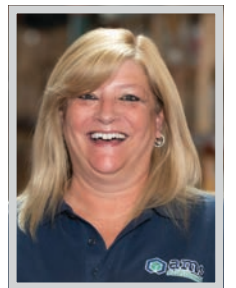
TIAUNIA HENRY

FINALIST

Partner
Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP

Tiaunia N. Henry is a partner in Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher's Los Angeles office where she is a member of the firm's Litigation Department with a diverse practice that focuses primarily on complex business litigation, including antitrust, breach of contract and transnational cases. As an experienced litigator and trial attorney, she has represented clients in various industries.

Henry has been an active member of the LA Area Diversity Committee since joining the firm in 2007. She has served as co-chair of Gibson's LA Area Diversity Committee since 2012 and as chair of the LA Black Affinity and the LA Women of Color Affinity Groups, and she is actively involved in the LA Parenting Group. In these roles, she has coordinated committee meetings, planned events for summer associates as well as incoming and existing diverse associates, and represented the firm at local law school recruiting events.



BETTY-LOU WISEMAN

FINALIST

President, West Coast
AMS Fulfillment

Joining AMS in June 2004 as executive vice president of client services, Betty-Lou Wiseman draws from significant experience involving progressive positions. In May of 2019, she was promoted to president of AMS Fulfillment after participating in the acquisition of AMS by Fort Point Capital.

Wiseman has helped craft AMS' inclusive culture so that it has significance to the clients, the workforce, and the community. For years, she has built a unique relationship with the community, and she is joined by the company's volunteer committee. The employees of AMS benefit from Wiseman's executive leadership, which inspires community programs, and is an established part of the AMS culture as a B Corporation. She has served on the board for the SCV Domestic Violence Center and is an avid supporter of fundraiser events supporting the local SCV Sheriff Station, SCV Search & Rescue, Senior Concerns, multiple youth organizations and Single Mothers Outreach.

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COMMUNITY IMPACT AWARD (MID-SIZED COMPANY) HONOREE

MELANIE MAWEMA

Director of Administration, West Region
Barnes & Thornburg LLP

Melanie Mawema has more than two decades of experience in legal and non-legal personnel recruiting, employee relations, and aligning employee performance and rewards with companies' strategic goals. She began her career as a human resources coordinator for a law firm in Century City.

Mawema serves as a member the Barnes & Thornburg's Racial Justice Committee, which pledges to take meaningful action to address the issues of racial equity and justice in the communities where the firm has offices and throughout the country. The committee works within the firm, with clients, and with other partners to create short- and long-term change and invests time and resources to advance its mission of equal opportunities and justice for people of color.

Through this involvement, Mawema played a key part in supporting the firm's \$50,000 donation to the Social Justice Learning Institute (SJLI), a Los Angeles-based nonprofit dedicated to improving the education, health and well-being of youth and communities of color. Following the donation in 2020, she led initiatives to create a partnership with SJLI, resulting in volunteer opportunities for members of the office at SJLI's site in Inglewood.

Similarly, Mawema was actively involved in researching and facilitating efforts surrounding the firm's \$50,000 donation towards RISE in San Diego this past January. RISE is an organization that aims to elevate and advance urban leadership through dialogue-based civic engagement, dynamic nonprofit partnerships, and direct training and support to increase the capacity of urban residents to effect meaningful community change.



DERRICK COLEMAN
FINALIST
Principal
GHJ

Derrick Coleman is a principal at GHJ and the Search and Staffing Practice leader.

Search and Staffing specializes in the placement of accounting and finance professionals into temporary and permanent positions across a broad range of industries. His clients include many of the top organizations across Los Angeles County.

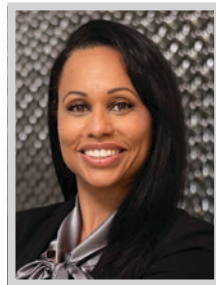
As practice leader of GHJ's recruiting division, Coleman has used his influence to implement diverse and equitable hiring practices. He is continuously promoting and utilizing these practices for clients and encouraging his team to do the same. He continues to be recognized for his leadership in diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility at his firm, in his field and in the community. Within GHJ, he leads GHJ's BIPOC Cohort, an employee resource group focused on advancing the careers of professionals who are black, indigenous and people of color.



HAYLEY DICKSON
FINALIST
Wealth Management Advisor
Northwestern Mutual

Hayley Dickson seeks to help clients un-learn shame, fear, and paralysis when it comes to their financial reality. She realizes that even among highly educated groups, members of our communities have too long gone without the important resource of a sound financial education. An advocate for women, Persons of Color, and the LGBTQ+ community, Dickson views financial planning as a means of empowerment for her clients.

Dickson serves as the vice-chair of the Northwestern Mutual LGBTQI+ and Ally Council, whose mission is to strengthen the attraction, development, and retention of LGBTQ+ advisors in the Plocher Network office and increase Northwestern Mutual's brand awareness and market share in the LGBTQ+ community. The council's four core committees do this by providing leadership and allies with valuable educational opportunities and resources from which to learn about the LGBTQ+ community.



TANYA GREENE
FINALIST
Partner
McGuireWoods LLP

McGuireWoods partner Tanya Greene is a respected litigator who works on high-profile, complex litigation for the most prominent corporations in the world. She is a pro bono champion who has led successful legal challenges for homeless and displaced Los Angeles residents. She is also a mentor who provides substantial pro bono opportunities for McGuireWoods associates.

At McGuireWoods, Greene advances diversity and inclusion by recruiting and mentoring the next generation of women and minority lawyers and giving them opportunities to develop as leaders and make an impact in the community. She actively mentors several law students and associates. Greene also mentors junior associates in the National Bar Association's Associate Advancement Academy for Excellence – the nation's oldest and largest national association of predominantly African-American lawyers, judges, law professors, and law students, with a network of over 67,000.



RAFFI ZEROUNIAN
FINALIST
Partner; Los Angeles Market Leader
Hanson Bridgett LLP

Raffi Zerounian, the market leader for Hanson Bridgett's Los Angeles Office, has a 360-degree trademark practice, handling all facets of counselling, clearance, prosecution, enforcement, litigation, and licensing.

Zerounian is committed to increasing diversity in the legal field as underscored by his leadership as the administrative head of Hanson Bridgett's Los Angeles office. Among his notable accomplishments in building Hanson Bridgett's Los Angeles office since its founding nine years ago to approximately 50 individuals, he has worked hard to hire and retain a diverse attorney and administrative team. Half of the firm's partners in Los Angeles are women, and every single partner in the office is either a woman or an attorney of color. In the Los Angeles office, 70% of the associates are female, 63% are attorneys of color, and 11% are LGBTQ+, and, overall, 85% are either women, attorneys of color, women attorneys of color, or LGBTQ+.

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COMMUNITY IMPACT AWARD (GROWING COMPANY) HONOREE

CHAMBERLAIN DURU

Diverse Business Manager, California
Burns & McDonnell

Chamberlain Duru serves as the diverse business manager in California for Burns & McDonnell, a 100% employee-owned engineering, architecture and construction company. In his role, he helps advance a diverse supplier base, develop key client relationships, assist with proposal development and support project execution with a focus on growth and delivering client success. He also leads business diversity initiatives, representing Burns and McDonnell within business communities throughout California. He enjoys advancing the number of diverse suppliers who provide innovative ideas and a client-service attitude on the firm's infrastructure projects.

He is a passionate advocate for advancing entrepreneurship and education, helping small and diverse business owners maximize their potential and opportunities.

An African American architect who owned his own firm in Los Angeles first introduced Duru to supplier diversity more than a decade ago. This introduction later manifested into an opportunity to become the business affairs manager at Los Angeles World Airport (LAWA), where he helped develop policy for small and diverse businesses for LAWA's various capital projects and operational needs. In this position, he saw firsthand the influence and impact small and diverse firms can have on large firms and agencies.

His experience as a project facilitator taught him that long-term partnerships are vital to business success. As the diverse business manager in the Los Angeles office of Burns & McDonnell, he works with a variety of companies. In 2022, he helped the Burns & McDonnell team spend nearly \$61 million with small and diverse suppliers in California to execute critical infrastructure projects.



PATRICK BUCHANAN
FINALIST
VP of Marketing
Good American

Patrick Buchanan serves as the VP of Marketing for Good American, the first, fully inclusive fashion brand to offer trend-forward designs made to fit women of all sizes. In this role, he's responsible for ensuring the Good American brand upholds its mission, which is greatly aligned with DE&I. Specifically, he's led the charge for an annual Open Casting which gives individuals around the world the opportunity to be cast in the brand's #GoodSquad, a group of real women leading the charge in bringing inclusivity to the fashion industry.

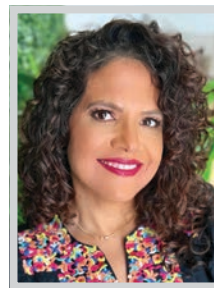
Buchanan is also an LGBTQ advocate who's proudly redefining what it means to be a young Black man/professional in America. His community experience extends to his service in spearheading professional campaigns for Good American and previous employers in the LGBT space, to leverage their platforms in support of diversity and inclusion.



TERRENCE FRANKLIN
FINALIST
Partner
Sacks, Glazier, Franklin & Lodise LLP

Terrence Franklin has over three decades of experience handling some of the most significant and complex trusts and estates disputes, and is regarded as one of the top litigators in the U.S.

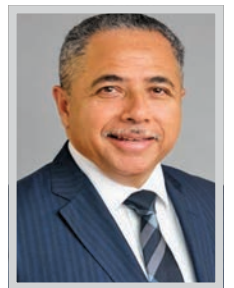
Franklin had been practicing trusts and estates litigation for nearly 25 years before he discovered that his legal career was the path to his mission in life, to "help bend the arc of history towards justice," by sharing the story of his family's experience escaping from slavery, nearly two decades before the end of the Civil War. In presentations, media interviews and articles, Franklin has retraced his journey to uncover his fourth great-grandfather's will, and the unexpected will contest that threatened to keep his fourth great-grandmother and her children and grandchildren enslaved. To help bend the arc of history towards justice, Franklin's goal is to widely educate others, and push back against dehumanization and racism.



SONIA SMITH KANG
FINALIST
Founder
Mixed Up Clothing

Sonia Smith Kang is an AfroLatina and proud "military brat" born in Puerto Rico and then stationed on the Hawaiian island of O'ahu before calling Los Angeles home. She graduated from the University of San Francisco where she earned her degree and became an RN. After over a decade of being a critical care RN, She tapped into her creative side and founded Mixed Up Clothing, a children's apparel brand designed through a multicultural lens to celebrate culture, diversity, and inclusion.

Kang's designs address the unmet need of representation and cultural inclusivity in the children's fashion space by providing designs that celebrate cultural diversity, which would help children connect with their heritage, and feel seen and valued. Bringing her multicultural heritage and beauty from places she called home, Kang adds cultural elements to her designs which sets her apart from others in the industry.



JOHN MURILLO
FINALIST
Market President
Enterprise Bank & Trust

John Murillo continues to build on an already distinguished career in financial services, currently serving as senior vice president, market president for Enterprise Bank & Trust in Los Angeles. He has more than 30 years of experience, having worked his way from a part-time teller through multiple executive positions.

Murillo has become an integral member of the Los Angeles community and a strong advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion. He prides himself on using a consultative and collaborative approach to help his clients reach their financial objectives. He has an extensive background in managing and developing diverse and inclusive teams and a thorough understanding of establishing and growing customer relationships. As an example, while at Wells Fargo, he helped found an employee resource group called Amigos, which promoted and created opportunities for Latinos to move up and expand their careers into senior management.



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Medell K. Briggs-Malonson, MD, MPH

Winner, DEI Executive of the Year

UCLA Health, Homeless Healthcare Collaborative

Finalist, DEI Team of the Year

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Optum

DEI COMPANY OF THE YEAR (ENTERPRISE) HONOREE

OPTUM CA

With more than 25,000 physicians serving 2.6 million patients across some of the most diverse communities in California, Oregon and Washington, Optum Pacific West (with more than 11,000 employees) is the largest region in the Optum Health enterprise and understands the importance of cultural relevance in delivering high-quality health care and is dedicated to ensuring that its leadership, physicians, and care teams reflect the communities it serves.

At Optum, DEI extends beyond company culture and workplace well-being, it is embedded in how the organization does business — both internally, as a part of the decision-making process among its leadership and teammates; and externally, to benefit the patients it cares for and the communities it serves. Through the inclusive input of team members in its decision-making process, Optum California has laid the foundation to support an organizational culture focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion, resulting in the alignment of organizational priorities and a three-year roadmap to achieve desired outcomes with business impact.

In the workplace, Optum has implemented DEI accountability at the individual leader level. To do this, the company has conducted a workplace analysis, educated its leaders on their trends regarding workforce diversity, and developed achievable and scalable goals for diverse promotion/hiring that is monitored on an annual basis.

This means there's leadership accountability for diverse promotion/hiring as Optum works to close the gender/race gap and have 50% women and people of color represented within its leadership team. Additionally, Optum has created a DEI council that invites its diverse workforce to be part of the movement.



PANDA RESTAURANT GROUP FINALIST

At Panda Restaurant Group (Panda), the world leader in Asian dining experiences and parent company of Panda Express, Panda Inn, and Hibachi-San, the company is dedicated to becoming a world leader in people development. Founded by immigrants and family-owned since its inception in 1973, Panda currently operates over 2,500 locations worldwide with about 50,000 associates (employees).

Under the leadership of co-founders, co-chairs and co-CEOs Andrew Cherng and Dr. Peggy Cherng, the company maintains a rich and purpose-driven culture that focuses on values promoting growth, developing its people, and progressing the business. Panda was built on a foundation of diversity, equity, and inclusion. When the Cherngs opened the original Panda Inn in 1973, they committed to achieving the American Dream for themselves and their extended family of associates. Finding a sense of community and belonging was key in building Panda, with DEI becoming rooted in the foundation of Panda's culture.

SKANSKA

SKANSKA FINALIST

Skanska is one of the world's leading construction and development companies. Skanska's core operations in the U.S. include civil infrastructure, building construction, and developing self-financed commercial properties. An industry-leading innovator in both safety and project execution, Skanska offers competitive solutions for traditional and complex assignments that build a more sustainable future for its customers and communities.

Skanska uniquely positions its team to tangibly impact diversity and inclusion within the Los Angeles community. Skanska understands the value of diversity in the workplace, on the job site, and throughout the community. That is why DE&I practices are not only championed by its leaders and passionate individuals, but are ingrained in its current structure and in its growth business model. For example, when preparing for large jobs in the Los Angeles area, the Skanska team makes early efforts to understand and strategize for meeting goals for the inclusion of disadvantaged workers.

Smart & Final.

SMART + FINAL FINALIST

Founded in 1871, Smart & Final is one of the longest continuously operating food retailers in the United States, proudly nourishing the communities it serves for more than 150 years. The company, based in Commerce, operates 253 locations throughout California, Arizona and Nevada.

Smart & Final's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiative is a formalized extension of the company's core values. With more than 11,000 associates throughout its 253 stores, warehouses, and the Store Support Center, the company approaches DEI as a source of strength to ensure its people, policies and processes reflect the communities it serves. Formally established in 2021, the DEI committee was created to foster an atmosphere where diversity is respected and to position the company for long-term success in its hiring and retention efforts. DEI at Smart & Final comprises four key areas that impact every aspect of the company: communications, recruiting, training, and mentoring.



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Lockton's Pacific Series DE&I Team Is Honored To Have Been Named *Los Angeles Business Journal's* DE&I Team Of The Year!



Teena Hostovich



Donna Adedipe



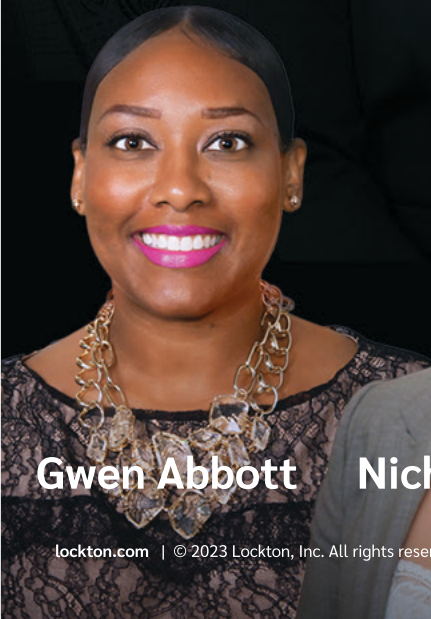
Mariana Domic



Kristina Hess



Gloria Garcia



Gwen Abbott



Nichelle Wileman



Ed Washington



Chris Polityka



Armida Flores



DEI COMPANY OF THE YEAR (LARGE) HONOREE

PARSONS

Ralph M. Parsons founded Parsons Company in 1944 with a recognition that the ability to hire and retain good people was key to developing and maintaining international acclaim. Today, Parsons Corporation is best known as a leading engineering and construction firm operating at the nexus of critical infrastructure and national security, delivering solutions that connect communities, reimagining physical infrastructure, increasing sustainability and health, and protecting our world from any threat across land, sea, space, air and cyber.

Parsons' commitment to the values of diversity, equity and inclusion began long before it was popular for companies to support these values. The company pursues diversity, equity, and inclusion in its workforce, business units, suppliers, and services because Parsons recognizes optimum solutions require perspectives from many different backgrounds; it empowers employees to be their authentic selves at work; and it creates inclusive work environments.

Throughout its storied history, Parsons has always been committed to supporting both its individual and global communities. As such, it is on a journey together to transform the culture of Parsons and its global and local communities using the lens of DE&I, which encompasses racial and gender inequity and social justice.

Recognizing that a global organization such as Parsons has significant impact on its employees and the communities it serves, Parsons has developed an enterprise-wide commitment to programs that support local and national communities. Each of Parsons' offices is encouraged to support communal efforts as determined by the office leaders and the company's enterprise-wide community impact initiatives are conscious efforts supported by company leadership.



ARMANINO FINALIST

Armanino LLP is one of the 20 largest independent accounting and business consulting firms in the nation with six offices in Southern California. Armanino provides an integrated set of audit, tax, business management, consulting and technology solutions to companies in the U.S. and globally.

Armanino's commitment to DEI issues is present at all levels of the firm, with its CEO, general counsel, CMO and CPO all holding leadership roles on the firm's IDEAL (Inclusion of Diverse Employees and Leaders) team and other groups that focus on DEI issues. Armanino's approach to DEI revolves around inclusivity and education. The firm has chosen to develop broad-based initiatives and outreach. In 2019, CEO Matt Armanino signed the CEO Action for Diversity & Inclusion pledge to cement the firm's commitment to develop programs and initiatives that identify and foster opportunities for underrepresented groups.



BLACKLINE FINALIST

Companies come to BlackLine because their traditional manual accounting processes are not sustainable. BlackLine's cloud-based financial operations management platform and customer service help companies move to modern accounting by unifying their data and processes, automating repetitive work, and driving accountability through visibility.

BlackLine was founded in 2001 by Therese Tucker, the first VC-backed, female tech founder in Los Angeles to take her company public. Diversity, equity and inclusion are deeply rooted in the company's core values in service to its global workforce, its customers and the communities in which its people work and live. BlackLine is constantly advancing a culture of inclusion that empowers employees to think, create, serve and deliver in a workplace where employees they truly belong. BlackLine continues to support Employee Resource Groups, made up of employee-led groups designed to support and foster connections among underrepresented groups, including women, people of color, LGBTQ+ and military veterans.



HUDSON PACIFIC FINALIST

Hudson Pacific Properties is a real estate investment trust serving dynamic tech and media tenants in global epicenters for these synergistic, converging and secular growth industries. Hudson Pacific's unique and high-barrier tech and media focus leverages a full-service, end-to-end value creation platform forged through deep strategic relationships and niche expertise across identifying, acquiring, transforming and developing properties into world-class amenitized, collaborative and sustainable office and studio space.

At Hudson Pacific, diversity, equity and inclusion are core values. The company's holistic approach to DEI touches all aspects of the business – from how it promotes job openings to the organizational culture and work with external contractors and suppliers. Internally, the company's commitment to equity starts with employees, who are valued at all levels of the organization and provide ample opportunities for growth while striving to foster and celebrate DEI.



RSM US LLP FINALIST

RSM US LLP is the leading provider of professional services to the middle market. The clients it serves are the engine of global commerce and economic growth, and the company is focused on developing leading professionals and services to meet evolving needs. Its purpose is to instill confidence in a world of change, empowering its clients and people to realize their full potential.

RSM places a high value on DE&I. Internally, RSM invests over \$3 million annually, has five full-time resources and has over 200 professionals serving dual roles executing its Culture, Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) programming. Throughout RSM's business practices, its commitment encompasses key pillars of community, diversity, ethics and sustainability. In 2020, RSM made a commitment to underrepresented populations through its partnerships with three diverse professional organizations, the National Association of Black Accountants, Association of Latino Professionals For America, and the Pan-Asian business professional membership organization, Ascend.

CONGRATULATIONS, KEVIN JORDAN



Kevin Jordan
SVP, Inclusion, Diversity
& Community Outreach

Recognized by the
Los Angeles Business Journal
for being a **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion,**
Executive of the Year finalist.



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DEI COMPANY OF THE YEAR (MID-SIZED) HONOREE

HOK

A global provider of planning, design and delivery solutions for the built environment since the firm's founding in 1955, HOK has developed into one of the world's largest, most diverse and respected design practices. It leads the planning, design and delivery process for diverse assignments in every part of the world, with a track record of delivering visionary projects on time and within budget, and employs more than 1,600 professionals linked across a global network of 26 offices.

To improve its recruitment and retention of employees from diverse backgrounds, HOK has been tracking and working to increase the diversity of its leadership since 2015. Since then, HOK's diversity metrics have shown steady progress in reaching milestone goals that continuously raise the bar when it comes to representation at every level, position and sphere of influence across the firm.

In 2021, HOK set even more aggressive diversity goals for firm leadership roles, emerging leaders, the board of directors and the core boards (design, management, technical and marketing). It has since realized or surpassed most of these goals, resulting in its recent commitment to attaining new challenge goals by 2025. The Diversity Advisory Council is working with HOK's leaders to establish even more aggressive goals going forward.

Each of HOK's regional practices has developed diversity goals with target metrics. By requiring them to report their progress to the firm's board of directors every six months, they are held accountable for continuous improvement.



CORDOBA CORPORATION FINALIST

Cordoba Corporation has developed and grown into a statewide engineering, program management, and construction management firm specializing in the delivery of public infrastructure projects in the water, energy, education and facilities, and transportation industries. With 550 employees, it is a mid-sized firm providing a local presence to clients across the state.

Diversity and inclusion have been an integral part of Cordoba's DNA since its founding by George Pla, a first-generation immigrant from Mexico. Pla founded Cordoba in 1983 with a mission to make difference by addressing infrastructure needs, uplifting and empowering local communities, and improving the lives of all Californians. One of Cordoba's early landmark projects was its work with the California Public Utilities Commission to establish the Supplier Clearinghouse, the first comprehensive database of disadvantaged small businesses. More than 77% of Cordoba's staff are from a diverse background including minority, women, LGBTQ and veteran employees.



GREENBERG TRUARIG FINALIST

Greenberg Traurig, LLP is a global law firm with more than 2,650 attorneys in 44 offices in the United States, Europe, Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East. The firm offers deep capabilities in a multitude of specialty areas, including sophisticated litigation, high-profile corporate transactions, and restructuring and bankruptcy matters.

Greenberg Traurig is also at the forefront of pushing diversity within the legal profession. The firm is Mansfield Rule 5.0 Certified Plus by The Diversity Lab. Greenberg Traurig is diverse by design, a value that is firmly rooted in the firm's DNA. In 1967, facing religious discrimination when trying to find employment at traditional, white-shoe law firms, the firm's three founders sought to create a new kind of firm, one where everyone was welcome. For Greenberg Traurig, diversity, equity, and inclusion are not slogans but critical principles guiding the firm's investment in the legal profession and client-service minded ethos.



HOWARD BUILDING CORP. FINALIST

HBC is a general contracting firm founded in 1983, servicing a broad spectrum of clients from its two Southern California offices. It is a 100% employee-owned company, and its diverse project teams are committed to exceptional client service.

HBC sets annual diversity hiring, promotion, and training targets based on current workforce demographics versus labor market availability. The goal is to secure a workplace that is reflective of its community's demographics while enhancing the opportunities of historically underrepresented groups. The company ensures training opportunities are prioritized for underrepresented groups to encourage participation in leadership development and industry-specific professional credentialing courses. HBC promotes on-the-job mentorships, cross-training, and encourages career development, including inter-departmental transfers into operational roles. Additionally, HBC actively encourages participation in (and recruits from) organizations such as Women in Construction Operations and are currently developing an internship program with the Inner-City Educational Foundation and local junior colleges.



MOSS ADAMS FINALIST

Moss Adams is a fully integrated professional services firm dedicated to growing, managing, and protecting prosperity. With over 4,400 professionals across more than 30 locations, it works with the world's most innovative, dynamic, and promising clients and markets.

Moss Adams started its inclusion and diversity efforts in 2008, after firm leadership recognized the need to invest in the careers and leadership development of women. This objective led to the development of Forum W, which is intended for all women at Moss Adams. Moss Adams has been a leader in working toward gender equity, and in 2014, the firm expanded its efforts to recreate this success on behalf of its other underrepresented communities. These efforts have been paying off. On a local level, of the 150+ professionals Moss Adams have in the greater LA market, it has 20 partners – and nine are women.

Diverse by design.

Greenberg Traurig is proud to sponsor the **2023 Los Angeles Business Journal's Diversity, Equity + Inclusion Symposium and Awards** and congratulates this year's winners and finalists.

From the start, Greenberg Traurig has understood the importance of promoting a diverse and inclusive workplace. We believe that diverse viewpoints produce smarter ideas for our clients. We are committed to supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion within the legal industry.

#1

No. of African American Partners

#2

No. of Latino & African American Attorneys

#3

No. of Latino & LGBTQ+* Partners

#4

No. of Asian American Partners

#5

No. of Minority Attorneys

*Diversity & LGBTQ Scorecards, The American Lawyer/National Law Journal, 2022

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WORLDWIDE LOCATIONS

United States, Europe
and the Middle East,
Asia, Latin America



WELLS FARGO DEI SMALL BUSINESS AWARD HONOREE

DTO LAW

DTO Law was formed in 2019 by former Big Law attorneys who had a vision of starting a law firm owned by women and people of color. DTO is a member of the National Association of Minority and Women Owned Law Firms (NAMWOLF). DTO Law considers it a top priority to embody diversity, rather than merely paying lip service to it. The firm wholeheartedly believes in diversity and inclusion, which is reflected in the way it recruits and hires.

Nearly 80% of DTO attorneys identify as Persons of Color and/or female and 25% of the firm's partners identify as LGBTQ+.

The firm's lawyers are involved in several high-profile volunteer activities to help foster D&I in the Bar. Will Delgado, managing and founding partner, has been a tireless advocate for the diversification of the legal profession throughout his career. He has been one of the leaders of NAMWOLF for many years, serving on the Board of Directors for six years, including two terms as its vice chair. Founding partner Megan O'Neill dedicates her time and expertise to a wide variety of volunteering and speaking opportunities related to DEI. She is an active member of The Leadership Council on Legal Diversity. Partner MaryBeth Heydt is a voting member of the California Lawyers Association Real Property Law Section and serves as chair of the Diversity & Inclusion Panel for the Section.

Partner Lauren Hudecki heads the firm's DEI Committee, which is working on several initiatives, including a series of articles, a fellowship program for law school students, and several pipeline programs.



AGENCY GUACAMOLE FINALIST

Agency Guacamole is an award-winning PR, events, influencer marketing and social media agency, dedicated to exceptional service and developing innovative, cross-platform experiences for leading beauty and lifestyle brands. The company was founded in 2016 by Bilal Kaiser and works with clients including Redken, Biolage, Urban Decay, Maybelline and Equinox.

B.L.N.D. (Beauty, Lifestyle and Nurturing Diversity) was an initiative started by Agency Guacamole principal Bilal Kaiser as he saw a need for more voices in the industry from different communities: people of color, LGBTQ+, differently abled and any other underrepresented group that wanted to be part of the beauty and lifestyle space. Since 2018, the B.L.N.D. initiative has given those in the beauty and lifestyle industry a platform to have a real conversation around the on-going challenges, opportunities and inspiration in the space. Each event has been centered around a panel of diverse speakers to share their thoughts and ideas.



BE STRUCTURED TECHNOLOGY GROUP FINALIST

Be Structured Technology Group believes every organization deserves technology that works for them and not against them. As a company, the team has been together since 2007, but the staff and leaders have decades of IT experience.

Be Structured promotes a solid work-life balance and a feeling of welcome inclusivity for all employees. The company provides flexible schedules and a significant benefits package, including a generous commuter allowance. The management team actively invites employee feedback on ways to improve the work environment via weekly confidential surveys. Be Structured prides itself on providing a safe workplace for all of its employees. The company prioritizes planning monthly company outings to promote team bonding. It plans something different every month to ensure its employees feel included and alter the plans based on collected feedback. Ensuring its employees feel appreciated and seen is something Be Structured takes seriously.



C-SWEET FINALIST

C-Sweet is the premier national organization fostering executive level relationships for business development, collaboration and expanded career paths. The company is made up of women working with each other at the highest levels. Women prospering in the workforce, succeeding as entrepreneurs, and promoting economic empowerment is the mission.

C-Sweet produces digital events, live educational networking programs, panels, keynote speakers, breakout sessions, as well as national summits and intimate executive level dinners, plus the podcast "C-Sweet Talks." The company fosters unique opportunities to exchange ideas, strategies, and tactics for success. The company's founders believe that "embracing diversity makes us stronger. Incorporating all opinions makes for better business, as well as a better world." C-Sweet's programming has explored leadership, hiring, corporate practices, diversity policies, and work with local non-profits dedicated to DE&I causes.



ALBRIGHT, YEE & SCHMIT, APC FINALIST

Albright, Yee, & Schmit, APC (AYS) is a prestigious multi-specialty law firm serving individuals, businesses & governmental entities throughout the United States. Founded 40+ years ago, Albright, Yee & Schmit, APC, has become well known for its high-level legal work and personalized service.

No less than 80% of AYS' employees are diverse and all the firm's leaders are diverse. Additionally, AYS appreciates the importance and necessity of women in the workplace and includes women in all phases of the firm's operations. AYS is an employee-driven and managed law firm. Employees determine who is hired, what cases they take, and which lawyers are best suited for each particular case. AYS employees determine salary, raises and all other aspects of the business. The firm also assists its employees with child care and other forms of financial assistance.



CONGRATULATIONS, MELANIE!

Barnes & Thornburg congratulates its own **Melanie Mawema** for receiving the **Los Angeles Business Journal Diversity, Equity + Inclusion Community Impact Award**. Melanie is a champion in the community and for our firm. We applaud her commitment to advancing diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace and in greater Los Angeles.



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DEI NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION OF THE YEAR (LARGE) HONOREE

CHILD CARE RESOURCE CENTER

Under the leadership of Dr. Michael Olenick, who assumed the position of president and CEO in 2003, the Child Care Resource Center (CCRC) each month provides quality support, development, and education to almost 50,000 children and families in its 22,500 square mile service area. The center remains a unique and distinctive leader in the child care industry. Current programs include resource libraries, home visiting, workforce development, family engagement, financial care assistance, Head Start preschool, Early Head Start, Early Head Start, childcare partnerships, motherhood programs and much more.

DEI is integrated into the CCRC's everyday services provided for children, families, providers, and staff. With an employee workforce of 1000 and growing, CCRC further committed to DEI when Dr. Olenick created the Anti-Racist Taskforce in June 2020. Now known as the DEI council, the task force advocated for a new division, and CCRC's first director of diversity, equity and inclusion was hired in January of 2022.

Since then, the agency has: expanded the DEI Division and hired two DEI specialists backed by a robust budget; created a DEI strategic plan for 2023-2025; launched five Employee Resource Groups; created a DEI certificate program for more in-depth learning; provided DEI educational books to all employees; hosted a company-wide DEI panel as well as monthly events; presented best equity-minded practices at the National Black Childhood Development Institute in Washington DC; created a DEI committee on the board; provided DEI education and resources to external providers; and created customized DEI action plans for its more than 10 divisions.



CALIFORNIA CREDIT UNION FINALIST

California Credit Union is a federally insured, state chartered not-for-profit credit union founded in 1933 that serves public or private school employees, community members and businesses across California. With more than 165,000 members and assets of over \$4 billion, California Credit Union has 24 branches throughout Southern California.

DE&I is an important strategic initiative for California Credit Union as it works to effectively serve and represent its employee team, members and communities. California Credit Union is committed to taking thoughtful action to promote DE&I throughout its organization at every level as a powerful and essential tool to create an innovative workplace where differing viewpoints, life experiences, cultures, traditions, and mindsets come together to create a meaningful work environment, extraordinary member experience, and healthy, successful credit union. Through a variety of programs and initiatives, the organization puts this belief into active practice, welcoming and reflecting the diversity of its communities.



LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY FINALIST

Founded in 1911, Loyola Marymount University (LMU) is a top-ranked national university committed to fostering a diverse academic community rich in opportunity for intellectual engagement and real-world experience. It enrolls an academically ambitious, multicultural, and socioeconomically diverse student body. It also recruits, retains and supports a diverse faculty committed to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship and creativity.

LMU promotes anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion as intrinsic to its mission. The university seeks to actively cultivate an anti-racist climate that supports inclusive excellence and fights systemic oppression. LMU's 2021-2026 strategic plan, *Creating the World We Want to Live In*, articulates a commitment to "Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Innovation and Adaptability; and Extending Our Reach Beyond the Bluff." Also, in 2021, the Faculty Senate approved new requirements for "Studies in American Diversity," as part of the core curriculum.



OTIS COLLEGE OF DESIGN FINALIST

Otis College is among the most culturally diverse art and design colleges in the United States. It is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive campus environment where all students can thrive in their personal and academic endeavors. 77% of the student body are students of color; 22% are international students; 30% are first-generation college students and 82% percent of the students receive scholarships or financial aid.

Established in 1918 as Los Angeles' first professional school of the arts, Otis College of Art and Design is a non-profit 50113 institution and a national leader in art and design education. Otis College's commitment to DEI cuts across all constituent groups inclusive of faculty, staff, and students, where it has leveraged DEI expectations in hiring and recruitment practices, curriculum development, as well as formalized training and development of staff and faculty.



WOODCRAFT RANGERS FINALIST

Woodcraft Rangers was founded in 1922 when the agency became independent from the national Boy Scouts Federation largely due to its early commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, something it saw missing from other youth organizations. From the beginning, Woodcraft has challenged the norm by opening its programs to all children regardless of gender, race, religion and socioeconomic background.

DE&I is a part of Woodcraft Rangers' DNA, serving as the galvanizing force in its foundation and continuously guiding the agency's direction. Woodcraft has maintained a longstanding focus on DE&I as seen through all of Woodcraft's guiding documents, including the agency's core values, and most recently revisited in 2018 as part of the agency's 2019-2022 strategic plan, which has as its first priority to "create a culture that reflects all core values, especially our commitment to inclusion and equity, with high levels of accountability for all staff and leadership."



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DEI NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION OF THE YEAR
(MID-SIZED OR GROWING) HONOREE

HUE YOU KNOW

HUE You Know is a 20,000+ member production resource group for media professionals of color that was founded by television executive Bree Frank in 2017. Comprised of international members of multiple ethnicities, HUE You Know's principal focus is to create a safe space for professionals of all levels to post employment opportunities, seek mentorship and community.

Within the group, there are executive producers, co-executive producers, lawyers, accountants, directors, producers, CEOs, VPs, artists, and many more. The group also has public relations, licensing, marketing, film and TV (scripted and unscripted) and radio professionals represented. The organization is We are dedicated to employment, empowerment, and inclusion in all ways and welcome partnership and affiliation with organizations with the same principles.

Alongside Bree Frank, HUE You Know is run by Shirley Vernae Williams, Gideon Moncrieffe, Kristen V. Carter, and Anne Marie Denson who are all senior level content creators who are based between New York, Atlanta, and Los Angeles and interface with their members on a daily basis.

The organization's core values and guiding principles ensure that they fulfill the goal of creating an unwavering guide for the community. HUE You Know invites partnerships and affiliations with organizations committed to diversity, inclusion, equity, and belonging to move intention to action. The organization also encourages BIPOC professionals to hone their skills and assert their agency, ensuring individuals succeed as their authentic selves. HUE also strives to help organizations identify and eliminate barriers that have "tokenized" and limited fair treatment, access, opportunity and advancement for BIPOC.



MULTICULTURAL BUSINESS ALLIANCE FINALIST

The Multicultural Business Alliance (MBA) was developed to respond to the needs of the current business and community landscape. Small business and entrepreneurship in general have taken a steep hit recently. This is especially true of small businesses in marginalized communities particularly in low-income cities.

In light of current global and national events, the MBA founders felt pressed to respond as business owners and community leaders in a different way. Thus, the founders developed an alliance that would continue to forge equitable business and economic opportunities for business owners, entrepreneurs, community and leaders especially in times of crisis. Customizable business strategies and assessments give MBA the edge in providing effective and excellent programs that help Individuals and companies realize their strengths and capacity for growth. With its community outreach department, it is able to be inclusive to the needs of each city and departments based on needs and wants.



PLAY EQUITY FUND FINALIST

The Play Equity Fund is focused on bringing the transformational power of sport and play to all children and is the only nonprofit that advances play equity as a social justice issue. The Play Equity Fund was established as the LA84 Foundation's charitable partner in 2014. The lack of access to sport and play is a crisis hidden in plain sight, and through its partnerships and programs, the Play Equity Fund uplifts diversity, equity and inclusion as an underlying current in its daily mission.

The Play Equity Fund has an extremely diverse leadership team, a diverse board (58% women) and approaches its work through an equitable lens. The Play Equity Fund recently hired a vice president, Fernando Ramirez, in a newly formed position to work in collaboration with policy makers and elected officials to bring new resources to communities for increased access to sport and play for children.



POLK INSTITUTE FINALIST

Polk Institute Foundation is an innovative online enterprise offering a tuition-free Master Practitioner Training Accelerator and Access to Capital Funding, a 22-month robust training program with the focus of graduating fundable CEOs. It debuted on Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, January 15, 2021. Its third cohort began February 2, 2023.

At the Polk Institute Foundation, social entrepreneurship companies are endeavors that are purpose-driven and represent the passion of the founder, whatever their ethnicity. These endeavors focus on People, Planet, and Profit (Triple Bottom Line) and the belief that behaving ethically and generating profits are not conflicting concepts. In fact, they believe that they align to drive success for everyone involved. Polk Institute's mission, vision, reason for being is a testament to DE&I initiatives. Its management team, board of directors, advisory board and trainees reflect this mindset and are indicative of the nonprofit's commitment to diversity and inclusion.



THAI COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CENTER FINALIST

Two crises of the 1990s, the Civil Unrest of 1992 and the Northridge Earthquake of 1994, devastated communities of color in Los Angeles socially and economically. Many Thai small businesses were destroyed in the wake of the civil unrest, and many Thai families were displaced from the earthquake, exacerbating troubling conditions in underserved Thai and other immigrant communities.

In response, a Thai immigrant, Chanchanit Martorell, sought to address the social and economic inequities exacerbated by the crises in low-income, neglected and resource-starved communities such as East Hollywood, which has served as a historic port of entry for newly-arrived Thai immigrants since the 1950s. Martorell founded Thai CDC in 1994 to help all people access their basic right to a decent standard of living and quality of life. Since its establishment, Thai CDC has provided underrepresented, vulnerable populations in LA County with linguistically and culturally appropriate social and human services.



“Proud and honored to be a finalist for the Mid-sized company CEO of the Year, I wish to congratulate all the nominees, finalists, and honorees.”

Kunal Shah, P.E., RCDD, LEED AP
President | CEO



Recognized by the **Los Angeles Business Journal** for being a **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, CEO of the Year** Finalist.

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UNCOMMONLY INDEPENDENT

DEI TEAM OF THE YEAR HONOREE

LOCKTON INSURANCE

Lockton is the world’s largest privately held, independent insurance broker with \$2.7 billion in revenue, offices on six continents and more than 9,500 professionals serving clients with risk management, insurance, employee benefits consulting and surety services.

Energy, innovation and deep expertise fuel Lockton’s drive to solve problems, achieve real results and help businesses thrive. At Lockton, human capital is viewed as the most valuable asset and the company is committed to fostering, cultivating and preserving a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion. The collective sum of the individual differences, life experiences, knowledge, inventiveness, innovation, self-expression, unique capabilities and talent of Lockton’s people represents a significant part of not only its culture, but its reputation and achievement as well.

Lockton’s team embraces and encourages differences in age, color, disability, ethnicity, family or marital status, gender identity or expression, language, national origin, physical and mental ability, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, veteran status and other characteristics that make its people unique.

While many of the tenets of DE&I have been in place since 1990 as part of the Lockton Philosophies, the team introduced a formal Inclusion Program in 2019 and expanded it to include Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in 2020. The Lockton Pacific Series DE&I Council formed and is comprised of a diverse cross section of people who work together and serve as liaisons in their respective roles and internal departments within the company including executive leadership, operations and management, people services, producers and associates, and LEANs (Lockton Empowered Associate Networks).



EDMUNDS
FINALIST

Edmunds creates products that everyone can use to make their car buying experience easier. With in-depth reviews of every new vehicle, shopping tips from an in-house team of experts, plus a wealth of consumer and automotive market insights, Edmunds helps millions of shoppers each month select, price, buy and sell a car with confidence.

Edmunds’ DEI Task Force is a cross-functional group of employees passionate about fostering diversity and inclusion within the Edmunds workplace. Along with the Executive team and the Employment Experience team, this group sits at the forefront of establishing DEI initiatives within the organization to ensure DEI is instilled as a key component of its company culture. Achievements include a tangible evolution of Edmunds’ interview training process to highlight the importance of diversity and to bring attention to disrupting unconscious bias during the recruiting process.



FILMLA
FINALIST

Each year, thousands of visitors to Los Angeles take tours of studio backlots to see where their favorite movies and TV shows are filmed. This work is overseen by FilmLA, a not-for-profit public benefit organization and the official film office of the City and County of Los Angeles.

In July 2020, the FilmLA executive team initiated work on a diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging program, prompted by social issue concerns brought to light following the tragic death of George Floyd. The DEI Taskforce was formed – the first formal employee group established to weigh DEI considerations in the FilmLA workplace. It was comprised of members who volunteered and were selected based on their existing knowledge of DEI topics, passion exhibited in discovery interviews, and leadership recognition of their abilities. A strong focus was placed on the group as a whole and the diversity of identities, skills, and roles within it.



LA METRO TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
FINALIST

Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) develops and oversees transportation plans, policies, funding programs, and both short-term and long-range solutions to mobility, accessibility and environmental needs in the county.

Access to transportation services enriches lives and supports the health of the community. Metro Transit’s Equity & Inclusion department cultivates leaders who make the community stronger by ensuring services are accessible, providing a welcoming experience and respecting the individual value of employees, customers, and community members. The goal is a community that thrives because everyone has access to their destination and feels welcomed. The Metro team champions equity and inclusion by ensuring that Metro Transit promotes diversity to make employees feel valued, respected as their unique selves, and supported in their work. Advancing accessibility for customers and providing a welcoming, inclusive, and safe environment is accomplished throughout the team’s service options.



UCLA HEALTH
FINALIST

UCLA Health is among the most comprehensive and advanced health care systems in the world. Its mission is to provide state-of-the-art patient care, generate research discoveries leading to new treatments and diagnoses, and train future generations of health care professionals. Together, the UCLA Hospital System and the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA strive every day to be a leader in setting the standards of excellence.

UCLA Health believes that equity is an essential principle that must be incorporated into each part of the organization. One of the teams at UCLA Health that embodies its health DE&I efforts is the UCLA Homeless Healthcare Collaborative (HHC), a direct-in-community program to offer efficient, equitable and high-quality health care for people experiencing homelessness. Its team of doctors, nurses and social workers provides free health care, clothes and hygiene kits, and referrals to housing and social services directly to its unhoused neighbors.



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Profile of a Proactive Diversity Leader

As director of administration for the West Region Offices of Barnes & Thornburg, Melanie Mawema is responsible for recruiting, managing employee relations and aligning employee performance and rewards with the firm's strategic goals. She oversees Barnes & Thornburg's LA, San Diego and Salt Lake City offices and with over 100 employees that means there is hardly ever a dull

DEI SPOTLIGHT

moment in her day. Despite the many tasks that her role brings, Mawema has always found time in the past decade to devote to diversity and volunteering. She remains convinced that the two go hand in hand and that diversity in the workplace remains a win/win for employee and employer alike.

Below are some examples of Mawema's stellar volunteer efforts to educate her colleagues in the diversity space.

1. Mawema has spearheaded an initiative through the Expanding Horizons Internship Program in which a first-generation, college-bound high school intern joined the firm's office to have an intensive experience of skill development and personal growth aimed at preparing them for college, career, and civic life. The Los Angeles office has successfully participated in this program multiple times, with one former intern being inspired to go outside her comfort zone and apply to, and ultimately attend, Stanford University.

2. Just before COVID, Mawema organized a pop-up market that featured Black artists and Black-owned businesses. With a goal of increasing awareness of Black-owned businesses in an area where they're not as prevalent, she organized a number of vendors to set up shop in the courtyard of the firm's office building in Century City to sell jewelry, art, clothing and books. Through the event, Mawema put Black artists in the spotlight and highlighted the Black culture and excellence that is found throughout Los Angeles.

3. In further recognition of Black History Month, Mawema has worked to bring

speakers to the firm like Carl Weathers and Byron Allen. These presentations were especially timely during COVID and following the George Floyd murder when these two speakers led virtual discussion on raising awareness about racial issues, identifying and combating systemic racism, and the importance of racial equity in media.

4. Mawema was also integral in planning an inaugural retreat at the firm's headquarters in Indianapolis in the fall of 2022 for B&T's African American employees.

She was one of a team of four people who hosted more than 40 members at an event including a private tour of We. The Culture, an exhibit put on by 18 Indianapolis-based Black artists that addresses subjects as varied as religion and spirituality, queer identity, joy, hip-hop culture, materiality, art history, nature, and social justice. The retreat also included a full-day of networking and career strategies workshops that featured esteemed panelist and presenters.

5. More recently Mawema serves as a member the Barnes & Thornburg's Racial Justice Committee, which pledges to take meaningful action to address the issues of racial equity and justice in the 20 cities where the firm has offices and throughout the country. The committee works within the firm, with clients, and with other partners to create short and long-term change and invests time and resources to advance its mission of equal opportunities and justice for people of color. In this role, Mawema played a key part in supporting the firm's \$50,000 donation to the Social Justice Learning Institute (SJLI), a Los Angeles-based nonprofit dedicated to improv-

Social Justice Learning Institute, Inglewood, LA.



Mawema has always found time in the past decade to devote to diversity and volunteering. She remains convinced that the two go hand in hand and that diversity in the workplace remains a win/win for employee and employer alike.



Black History Month Event with Carl Weathers.



Black History Month Pop-Up in Century City.

ing the education, health and well-being of youth and communities of color. Following the donation in 2020, she led initiatives to create a partnership with SJLI, resulting in volunteer opportunities for members of the office at SJLI's site in Inglewood. Similarly, Mawema was actively involved in researching and facilitating efforts surrounding the firm's \$50,000 donation towards RISE in San Diego in January of 2023. RISE is an organization that aims to elevate and advance urban leadership through dialogue-based civic engagement, dynamic nonprofit partnerships, and direct training and support to increase the capacity of urban residents to effect meaningful community change. As with SJLI, Melanie is coordinating plans for attorneys in the firm's San Diego office to contribute time and professional experience in support of RISE.

6. Mawema is actively involved in many facets of the Los Angeles community. Prior to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, she volunteered her time at the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank, which serves more than 900,000 people each month. Additionally, Melanie has organized the office's involvement in the annual Justice Jog, which raises money for CASA of Los Angeles and furthers their goal of advocating for children and families in

LA County's child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

7. In 2021 Mawema worked with her firm diversity partner to create a 1L Diversity Scholarship program for the LA and San Diego offices. This program offers minority 1Ls the opportunity to join the summer program as paid associates. And gives those offices a pipeline into diverse talent from law schools.

In addition to her impressive career growth, Mawema earned and has maintained her SHRM- Certified Professional (SHRM-CP) and Professional in Human Resources (PHR) certifications.

Information for this article was provided by Barnes & Thornburg. Learn more at btlaw.com.





A Successful DEI Journey to Authenticity and Belonging

By KYMBERLY GARRETT

The journey for Children’s Bureau of Southern California’s diversity, equity, and inclusion formally began five years ago. Many informal tangible and intangible DEI work has been done especially within our communities

DEI SPOTLIGHT

that we serve to advance Programmatic access, inclusion in our board diversity committee and other areas. This springboarded more intentional conversations which began with a firmly committed Board of Directors who self-challenged the criticality to ensure that our community messaging was clear that Children’s Bureau was a place of authenticity and belonging.

We began with the clear understanding that for this work to be sustainable, it was important that it was built to last. That commitment became evident as we shied away from labels that would include: “initiative,” “project,” “focus” and firmly landing on “movement.” This would indicate to every constituent and beneficiary that our movement was akin to a river. We could then envision the fluidity of a movement that would branch into additional tributaries such as the invested cohorts of our Executive Leadership Team, our Senior Leadership Teams and of course our staff. Through this movement, the various cohorts of learning and out loud work ultimately pooled into the larger framework of the communities from which we serve, live and work.

We are so very proud of the work that has been created within our organization to propel and further our commitment. Building innovative awareness-based education within our internationally recognized internal university, CBU, we created “Perspectives and Perceptions” for our staff. This interactive two-year mandatory learning program was built upon the pillars of bridging ongoing awareness through action and outcomes. Additionally, we challenged our employees to socialize their learnings by building intellectually curious participation buy-in. This “peer-to-peer social learning” has been our most powerful tool in how related information is disseminated throughout meetings. It also has the inclusion that needs to occur in meetings, building important allyships and holding each other accountable to the DEI pillars in protecting safe spaces for personal authenticity.

We began hosting several book clubs that read socially aware books with weekly dialogue that now has become a hallmark of our social learning platform. Additionally, we have created affinity groups and a very active DEI Council that supports organizational direction, ideation, and opportunities to annually expand our horizons.

Equally important is our “Inclusive Led Learning” series. This is also a two-year mandatory awareness learning program designed exclusively for our people leaders. This companion learning with Perspectives and

Perceptions is critical to continue to validate our staff learning model as well as elevate our People Leaders to lead, act, think and behave inclusively in every aspect of their role. It will come as no surprise that we have completed more than 9,000 learning hours in three years through this systemic learning approach even during the uncertainty of a pandemic world!

Finally, the Executive Leadership Team has taken our DEI movement to the next steps in integrating these pillars throughout our business decisions and relationships. Starting with our procurement practices and vendor selections; our community access to programs, advocacy awareness and expansion. This serves to ensure that we each continue to create invaluable footprints in all our connections. This is the business of CB DEI and our commitment to authenticity and sustainability.

We began with the clear understanding that for this work to be sustainable, it was important that it was built to last. That commitment became evident as we shied away from labels that would include: “initiative,” “project,” “focus” and firmly landing on “movement.”

We pride ourselves in nurturing a Culture of Learning through Belonging. The organic alignment that our DEI movement has created with our Trauma Informed Resilience Oriented Care has given each of us the beacon of our DEI NorthStar. This movement hasn’t always been easy. The river takes our journey sometimes in unexpected directions that are challenging, for certain. But our firm belief that every person, every contact brings such invaluable treasures to us when diversity of thought and perspective; equitable practices through conviction and inclusive ideas and innovation are woven throughout the patterns of our organizational life.

We are humbled and honored to join others shoulder to shoulder to define and yes, redefine our place in the community as an organization that takes an active role in nurturing an inclusive and safe Los Angeles.



Kimberly Garrett, GPHR MBA is chief people & diversity officer for Children’s Bureau. Learn more at all4kids.org.

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Congratulations to FilmLA on being a NOMINEE for DE&I TEAM of the year. We are honored to have partnered with you in this endeavor.

Film LA

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Younger Generations Demand DEI in the Law

By SHILPA COORG

The impact of millennials, individuals born 1981 to 1996—and their values and preferences on work culture—has been undeniable. Gen Z, comprised of individuals born 1997 to 2012, is not far behind; the oldest Gen Z-er is now twenty-six and entering the legal work force.

Millennial attorneys have consistently demonstrated they desire flexible and collaborative work environments, opportunities for personal development, and a sense of community and purpose. Similarly, Gen Z employees want to see flexible work arrangements, work/life balance, and a work environment that reflects a commitment to global citizenship. Chief among the shared values between the two generations is the promotion of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I), which has now become a necessary call to action across industries. The benefits for organizations that increase diversity are numerous and well-documented. They include, for example, higher employee satisfaction, lower attrition, greater diversity of skill, and reputational advantages.

The legal profession has historically lagged other industries when it comes to diversity. According to the American Lawyer's 2021

Diversity Scorecard, only 18.6 percent of all attorneys were minorities in 2021.

The 2021 Diversity Scorecard may reflect that, to date, law firms have largely focused their diversity efforts on race, gender, and/or sexuality. While this work is vitally important—particularly considering how much progress along these lines remains to be made to diversify the legal profession—many law firms fall into the trap of limiting their initiatives to only those aspects of diversity and do not consider diversity in other forms. According to an annual survey conducted by Deloitte, millennials more broadly define diversity to encompass other factors as well and value an inclusive environment that invites a variety of ideas, perspectives, and life experiences.

Deloitte's latest survey of both millennials and Gen Z-ers shows diversity is still top of mind for both millennial and Gen Z employees. Nearly 40 percent of surveyed individuals had rejected a job or assignment because it did not align with their values. Indeed, younger attorneys are no longer simply looking for a diverse law firm that aligns with their values—they are expecting one, and they are unafraid to vote with their feet. In 2021, Millennials and Gen-Z-ers drove what has been dubbed the "Great Resignation," in which a record number of employees quit their jobs. The Great Resignation is showing

Gen Z employees want to see flexible work arrangements, work/life balance, and a work environment that reflects a commitment to global citizenship.

no signs of abating, with 40 percent of Gen Z and 25 percent of millennials indicating they intend to leave their current jobs within two years (a third of whom are willing to do so without another job lined up). What has proven effective in retaining employees, however, is a commitment to DEI: millennial and Gen Z employees are much more likely to remain with their employers for at least five years if they are satisfied with their employers' efforts to create a diverse and inclusive environment.

Just in time, it appears change is on the horizon. American Lawyer's latest Diversity Scorecard indicates last year, large firms made the largest year-to-year improvement in diversity since 2001: the percentage of minority attorneys rose

to 20.2 percent, over a one percent increase from the previous year and an almost two-and-a-half percent increase from 2020. Significantly, the American Lawyer changed its methodology in providing its firm rankings such that, for the first time, a firm's score would be negatively affected if it lacked representation in any ethnic category.

Although any progress is cause for celebration, considerable work remains. The diversity in law firms still does not match the diverse demographics of law students. In contrast to the 20.2 percent of minority attorneys in law firms, in 2022, the entering class of law students was the most diverse to date, with 36.6 percent identifying as people of color. Similarly, the California State Bar also reports California's attorneys do not reflect the state's diversity, with Latin-x attorneys being particularly underrepresented. This may be because many firms still adopt a narrow focus on diversity, or worse, have no focus at all.

Firms that do not take DEI seriously do so at their own peril. The impact of younger attorneys on the workforce is growing and upcoming leaders are carving a new path. Law firms would be well-served by leading the charge.

Shilpa Coorg is a litigation attorney at DTO Law. To learn more about the firm, visit DTOLaw.com.

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Cross-Country Latino Prosperity Tour Announced

Following President Biden's State of Union address in February, SBA administrator Isabella Casillas Guzman traveled to Tucson, Arizona to announce plans for the upcoming Biden-Harris Administration Latino Prosperity Tour. This tour will spotlight the whole-of-government approach the Biden-Harris Administration has taken to support, uplift, and invest in the Latino community, as well as underscore the Administration's ongoing commitment to expanding pathways to prosperity in Latino communities across the nation. While Latinos generate nearly \$2.8 trillion in economic activity, studies show that a significant opportunity gap persists due to underinvestment. The multi-city tour will feature resources from across the federal government that support education, housing, entrepreneurship, and more as avenues to generate economic wealth and address the racial wealth gap.

"President Biden is investing in America, and this tour connects the Latino community to those federal investments – meeting people everywhere they are to turn their possibilities into reality," said Administrator Guzman. "For the Latino community, entrepreneurship is a pathway to prosperity, to successful community outcomes, and generational wealth building. As the daughter of a small business

owner, and as an entrepreneur myself, I have seen first-hand the difference that access to resources and support can have. That is why I am thrilled to lead this effort on behalf of the Biden-Harris Administration, and look forward to hitting the road with my fellow Cabinet members and senior leadership over these next few months."

"The Biden-Harris Administration is leading the way to ensure Latino families across the nation can live with dignity, respect, and achieve success," said White House Senior Advisor to the President Julie Rodriguez. "Latinos are hardworking, starting small businesses at historic rates, and committed to making their lives and communities better. With the Latino Prosperity Tour, the Biden-Harris Administra-

tion is able to shine a spotlight on local Latino leaders and small business owners who are a powerful testament to this Administration's efforts to increase economic opportunity for Latino communities so that they can use their full potential and build generational wealth."

The lingering issues exacerbated by COVID-19 have created growing economic challenges for communities of color, especially in Latino communities. The Biden-Harris Administration has addressed disparities in Latino communities by helping more entrepreneurs achieve the dream of business ownership, expanding access to health care, and providing student debt relief. The Latino Prosperity Tour will directly engage underserved Latino populations in conversation, gather feedback, provide

connection, and discuss ways the Biden-Harris Administration can address the unique access barriers they are experiencing.

Through historic investments in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the Inflation Reduction Act, and the CHIPS and Science Act, the Biden-Harris Administration continues its commitment to deliver on the promise of increasing opportunity for all, including every Latino family and community.

SBA Administrator Isabella Casillas Guzman, the highest-ranking Latino official on the economy in President Biden's Cabinet, will be touring the country with fellow Cabinet members to highlight the historic investments the Biden-Harris Administration has made in Latino communities, in addition to featuring resources available across the federal government. Administrator Guzman and other members of the Cabinet will hear first-hand from diverse Latino communities across the nation about their needs. Details of the tour will be shared as it progresses, including stops in rural, diaspora, and growing Latino communities. More information about tour steps, participants, etc., will be announced in the near future.

To learn more, visit sba.gov.

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Companies with Greater Gender Diversity Deliver Better Overall Employee Experiences

Advantages are most apparent when at least one-third of promotions go to women

Companies with practices that support greater gender diversity are rated more effective by their employees across a range of topics than those that do not, according to an analysis by leading global advisory, broking and solutions company Willis Towers Watson. Additionally, companies that offer supportive family services and health education programs for women provide better environments for finding work/life balance and managing workloads.

The analysis links diversity practices with opinions from 1.7 million employees surveyed by Willis Towers Watson at 32 major companies that are included in the 2019 Bloomberg Gender-Equality Index (GEI). The employee attitude data are integrated with Bloomberg data on gender-related programs and practices to examine linkages between gender-diversity policies and employee opinion. The GEI tracks

the financial performance of companies that are committed to advancing women in the workplace through disclosure of gender-related data.

Among the key findings from the analysis:

- Companies that grant a higher percentage of promotions to women generate more favorable employee views, especially opinions of senior leadership. The advantages are most apparent when at least one-third of promotions go to women.

- Companies with more women among their most-compensated staff have more favorable employee attitudes, especially for opinions of career development. The advantages are most apparent when at least one-third of women are among the top 10% highest compensated executives.

- Offering family-supporting and health-enriching benefits, such as adoption assistance and women's health education, are linked with more favorable views of work/life balance and the ability to manage workloads.

"We are seeing more and more companies making gender diversity and equality a top

'Companies that are making a push toward gender diversity are experiencing a meaningful and positive impact on employee attitudes toward leadership, career development and other aspects of the workplace.'

priority, and rightfully so," said Laura Sejen, managing director, Human Capital and Benefits, Willis Towers Watson. "As our analysis shows, even small steps can make a difference. Companies that are making a push toward gender diversity are experiencing a meaningful and positive impact on employee attitudes toward leadership, career development and other aspects of the workplace."

"The results from this study echo what we

have learned through our work with the GEI: Diversity is good for business," said Kiersten Barnett, global head of the Gender-Equality Index. "Disclosure not only pushes each organization to take a data-led approach to their own practices but also inspires other employers to do the same across the broader inclusion and diversity spectrum."

With roots dating to 1828, Willis Towers Watson has 45,000 employees serving more than 140 countries and markets. The company designs and delivers solutions that manage risk, optimize benefits, cultivate talent, and expand the power of capital to protect and strengthen institutions and individuals. Learn more at willistowerswatson.com.

Bloomberg's enterprise solutions build on the company's core strength: leveraging technology to allow customers to access, integrate, distribute and manage data and information across organizations more efficiently and effectively.

For more information on Bloomberg or the Gender-Equality Index, visit bloomberg.com or bloomberg.com/gei.



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HR Leaders Must Establish Consequential Accountability to Achieve Diverse Leadership Benches

To achieve and sustain diversity among leadership benches, HR organizations must adopt consequential accountability, which meaningfully impacts behavior and outcomes for individual leaders, according to Gartner, Inc. Despite mounting external and internal pressures to prioritize and make demonstrable improvements on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), many organizations continue to struggle to make real and rapid headway.

The Gartner Leadership Progression and Diversity Survey of 3,500 employees revealed that organizations that embrace consequential accountability will reach gender parity 13 years earlier and racial parity 6 years earlier in their leadership benches. Consequential accountability integrates DEI measures into leaders' performance evaluation processes to ensure that there is mutual understanding of, and commitment to, DEI as a strategic priority.

"Consequential accountability ensures that senior leaders make meaningful progress against their DEI goals in order to progress in their organization," said Leah Johnson, vice president, advisory, in the Gartner HR practice.

HR leaders cite a lack of diversity in the pipeline as the top challenge to diversifying the leadership bench. While many organizations have attempted to address this by investing in recruiting diverse talent, particularly entry level employees, Gartner analysis shows progression of underrepresented talent stalls in mid-level and senior level positions. Ultimately, talent progression comes down to the decisions and behaviors of senior leaders.

Implementing consequential accountability to diversify the leadership bench requires HR to work with business leaders across the organization on three key areas:

INFORM LEADER DECISION-MAKING

Many HR organizations offer unconscious bias training to their employees to reduce workplace bias and help leaders think differently about talent and diversity. However, Gartner research has found this has no significant impact on ensuring an organization's performance management processes are unbiased.

HR must take a two-pronged approach to address how leaders make decisions:

- First, organizations must redefine criteria leaders use to make talent decisions with a focus on eliminating bias to drive equitable talent decisions.

- Second, HR leaders should integrate objective data into talent processes around leaders' key decision-making moments, such as evaluating candidates for a promotion or analyzing the health of succession pools.

CUSTOMIZE STRATEGIES

Progressive organizations are both contextualizing and localizing their DEI goals, strategies and action plans. HR should partner with local and/or business unit leaders to first identify diversity gaps in their talent pools and progression tracks to uncover unique challenges or concerns that may prevent them from taking action on DEI goals. HR should then establish localized DEI teams to support business leaders as they implement their own DEI solutions.

REQUIRE OUTCOMES FOR LEADER ADVANCEMENT

"When leaders are not held accountable

for advancing DEI goals, yet are personally responsible for advancing talent, this creates a disconnect," said Caitlin Duffy, research director in the Gartner HR practice. "Consequential accountability helps close these gaps in an accelerated and sustainable way by increasing personal urgency and relevance for leaders."

HR leaders should work closely with business leaders to develop organization-wide DEI strategies that are mutually understood and elevate DEI outcomes to the same priority as other business goals. Specifically, HR should implement the following three tactics:

- Create standardized mechanisms to monitor and track leaders' progress against individual DEI goals.

- Establish peer-to-peer leader transparency around DEI measures to motivate individuals toward action.

- Integrate DEI measures into performance evaluation processes to ensure leaders' advancement in the organization requires them to lead inclusively.

Learn more at [gartner.com](https://www.gartner.com).



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What Accounting Firms Need to Do if They are Serious About Diversity

Black accounting professionals face indignities and disrespect from both colleagues and clients, according to a recent study. However, the study also outlines what accounting firms can do if they are serious about recruiting, retaining, and respecting Black professionals.

“Protests related to race and social justice led to some difficult conversations with colleagues in 2020,” said Phebe Davis-Culler, co-author of the study and a clinical assistant professor of accounting at Clemson University. “We realized there would be value in telling the stories of successful Black auditors.”

“It became clear that many white colleagues thought inequities and microaggressions faced by Black people stopped when someone reached a certain education level or socioeconomic status,” said Joseph Reid, co-author of the study and an assistant professor of accounting at East Carolina University. “That’s not the case.”

“Sharing these stories could help the broader business community understand what Black professionals are forced to deal with, and what needs to be done if we are serious about inviting Black people to be auditors, CPAs and financial

professionals. There is a reason that decades of diversity initiatives have not been very successful.”

For this qualitative study, the researchers conducted in-depth interviews with 11 auditors and four former auditors who are Black.

“One reason for the small number of study participants was that there are so few Black people in our field that many declined to participate for fear of being identified,” Davis-Culler said.

One striking aspect of the findings was how similar the study participants’ experiences were.

“We talked to men and women from around the country, and the stories they shared were almost interchangeable,” Reid said.

Those stories shared three themes: stereotyping, insensitivity, and disrespect.

“Most of the participants reported instances of clients and subordinate workers questioning the expertise of Black professionals and undermining their authority,” Reid said. “There were also instances of client personnel assuming Black professionals were security or administrative staff.”

“Taken as a whole, these stories highlight

‘Sharing these stories could help the broader business community understand what Black professionals are forced to deal with.’

how Black auditors are automatically treated as outsiders,” Davis-Culler said. “This treatment further alienates them from the in-group, leading to even worse treatment, and it becomes a vicious cycle.”

But there are things companies can do.

“We need more training on how to be sensitive to issues that touch on race,” Davis-Culler said. “For example, don’t schedule company-wide events at a plantation. We also need more mentoring for Black men and women entering the field. And we need auditing firms who are willing to stand up to clients who engage in racist behavior.”

“Honestly, the first step is to acknowledge that there is a problem in our field, and that diversity initiatives alone aren’t solving the problem,” Reid said. “To individuals, I say: don’t be a bystander. Speak up on behalf of your Black colleagues.”

The study, “Auditing While Black: Revealing Microaggressions Faced by Black Professionals in Public Accounting,” is published in *Current Issues in Auditing*. Co-authors include Denise Dickins of East Carolina University and Julia Higgs of Florida Atlantic University.

Information for this article was provided by the American Accounting Association is the largest community of accountants in academia. Founded in 1916, the AAAHQ has a rich and reputable history built on leading-edge research and publications. The diversity of its membership creates a fertile environment for collaboration and innovation. Collectively, AAAHQ shapes the future of accounting through teaching, research and a powerful network, ensuring our position as thought leaders in accounting.

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Black Lawyers and Students Drive Diversity in Associate Ranks at U.S. Law Firms

NALP recently released its annual Report on Diversity at U.S. Law Firms. The report, based on information from the 2022-2023 NALP Directory of Legal Employers (NDLE), shows that overall gains continued to be made in the representation of women, people of color, and LGBTQ individuals in the associate and summer associate ranks at major U.S. law firms in 2022 as compared to 2021. Of particular note, the percentage of Black associates grew by nearly 0.6 percentage points to 5.77%, and the percentage of Black summer associates increased by 0.7 percentage points to 11.85%.

While improvements were also made at the partnership level in 2022, progress continues to lag far behind that of associates and summer associates, with people of color and women comprising just 11.40% and 26.65% of all partners, respectively, in 2022. For comparison, 28.32% of associates are people of color and 49.42% are women. The percentage of Black and Latinx partners each increased by just 0.1 percentage points to 2.32% and 2.97%, respectively as compared to 2021.

“While the legal industry continues to

make measurable gains in the representation of women, people of color, and LGBTQ individuals in the associate and summer associate ranks, it is equally clear that law firm leaders have failed to do the work necessary to break down the systemic barriers that prevent these individuals from joining them in the hallowed halls of partnership,” said NALP executive director Nikia L. Gray. “The data demonstrates that we are nowhere near achieving the progress one would expect from an industry that has been focused on the issue of diversity for over three decades.”

Highlights include:

- By race/ethnicity, Black associates saw the biggest year-over-year rise in representation, increasing by nearly 0.6 percentage points to 5.77% of all associates in 2022.

- The percentage of summer associates who are people of color grew by 1.7 percentage points, increasing from 41.34% in 2021 to 43.03% in 2022. Most of this growth can be attributed to the rise in the percentage of Black and multiracial summer associates, both increasing by approximately 0.7 percentage points to 11.85% and 5.48% of all summer associates,

respectively.

- The percentage of women summer associates was essentially flat at 55.11%. However, women accounted for more than half of all summer associates for the fifth year in a row.

- In 2022, people of color accounted for only 11.40% of all partners (equity and non-equity), while women comprised only 26.65%. Over the more than 30-year span in which NALP has been reporting these data, the representation of people of color and women in the partnership ranks has increased by less than 10 and 16 percentage points, respectively.

- Despite small gains in 2022, just over 4% of all partners are women of color, and Black and Latinx women each continued to represent less than 1% of all partners in U.S. law firms.

- The percentage of Black partners overall increased by just 0.1 percentage points, from 2.22% of all partners in 2021 to 2.32% in 2022. Latinx partners experienced a similar increase, growing from 2.86% of all partners in 2021 to 2.97% in 2022.

- San Diego and Miami had the largest share of partners of color, at 33.33% and 29.66%

respectively, primarily due to a high percentage of Latinx partners in those cities.

- Within multi-tier law firms, white men remain disproportionately represented in the equity partner ranks. In 2022, just 22.6% of equity partners were women. Additionally, only 9.0% were people of color.

- While the percentage of LGBTQ lawyers overall grew by half of a percentage point from 2021 to 2022 (the largest year-over-year increase since NALP began tracking these data) the proportion of LGBTQ summer associates continued to grow at a more accelerated pace, climbing by nearing 1 percentage point to 9.37% in 2022.

- Although reporting of gender non-binary lawyers remains limited since NALP first began collecting these data in 2020, the figure has grown each year. In 2022, 42 non-binary lawyers and 17 non-binary summer associates were reported by law firms, compared to 20 non-binary lawyers and 11 non-binary summer associates in 2021.

Read the Report on Diversity at U.S. Law Firms at nalp.org/reportondiversity.

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Most Americans See Latinos as Biggest Boost to U.S. Economy

Seven out of 10 Americans attribute the country's economic growth to Latino population growth, reflecting that U.S. Hispanics have the highest workforce contribution rate (65.6 percent) and have started the most small businesses out of any other population group over the last decade. However, according to a nationally representative survey—conducted by BSP Research and commissioned by the Latino Donor Collaborative in partnership with Latino Corporate Directors Association, UnidosUS, Raben Group and the Friends of the American Latino Museum—decades-old stereotypes and underestimations of the group remain prevalent among Americans across ethnic and racial backgrounds.

“We are glad to see that, comparing the results of this survey with our 2012 LDC Perception of Latinos Report, the needle has moved from Latinos mostly being perceived as ‘takers’ to being mostly perceived as ‘contributors’ today. Still, there is much work to do, specifically with media which has the capacity to help eliminate damaging stereotypes,” said Ana Valdez, executive director of the Latino Donor

Collaborative. “The release of today's data is invaluable because it identifies specific mis-characterizations of Latinos we must correct, so we have a clearer vision for all Americans: the more we risk making ill-informed decisions, the higher the cost in real dollars when we're investing resources as employers and as national leaders.”

The survey found that Latinos are most often seen inaccurately as essential workers or farm workers or laborers—with 48 percent of non-Latinos viewing Hispanics in these roles—despite the fact that among all racial and ethnic groups, Latinos command the highest rates of business creation, proving their role as entrepreneurs and business leaders. Additionally, while more than 75 percent of Americans feel that Hispanic immigrants have a lot to offer the country, most of them vastly overestimate that specific population and underestimate the U.S.-born share of Latinos. Non-Latinos estimate that the U.S.-born share of Latinos is as low as 31 percent, when in reality it is more than double that figure at 67 percent.

“This poll has good news and bad news for our community. The good news is that most Americans recognize the importance of Latinos and Latinas to our economy and appreciate our work ethic and values. The bad news is that most Americans also believe in widely inaccurate and negative myths and stereotypes—perpetuated by the news and social media—about our size and immigration status that are holding our country back from making the investments and enacting the policies that will benefit both our community and our nation. Overcoming these misconceptions and telling a more positive and accurate story about the Hispanic community, then, is even more important for the future of us all,” said Janet Murguía, UnidosUS president and CEO.

“Business leaders—both non-Latino and Latino—play a critical role in driving an accurate story of the Latino community and its huge impact on the American economy,” said Esther Aguilera, president and CEO of the Latino Corporate Directors Association. “We need business leaders everywhere to lean in, learn more, and speak up about the dynamism

and success of the Latino community. Otherwise, these misconceptions and contradictory views of our community will continue to slow progress for everyone.”

Misconceptions of the actual make-up of the Latino community also have an effect in how non-Latinos perceive the political power of the community. Many non-Latinos, particularly whites at 45 percent, expressed belief that increased Latino voter turnout would make no difference to the country, even while agreeing that elected officials would also pass more laws that benefited the group. Black and Asian adults in the United States hold different views about Latinos' voting power, however. More than 50 percent of Black and Asian adults in the United States said we'd be better off as a country if more Hispanics voted.

“These results also provide helpful information about how other communities perceive Latinos and may help create alliances and bridges to work together to further amplify the value of our nation's diversity” said Estuardo Rodriguez, president and CEO, Friends of the American Latino Museum. “With the recent

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congressional approval to create a National American Latino Museum, there's a huge opportunity right now to lift up the contributions Latinos have made for more than 500 years in the founding and building of our nation. Dispelling misconceptions and driving a more accurate narrative of our community will only serve us on our collective path to becoming a stronger nation.”

Other key findings of the survey, which was conducted among 2,200 Americans between late August and early September 2021, include:

Incorrect misperceptions about the broader Latino population are often connected:

- Latinos comprise 18.7 percent of the U.S. population, but non-Latinos overestimate that figure by double at 38 percent.
- U.S.-born Latinos are two-thirds of the broader Latino population, but all groups estimate that the majority are immigrants.
- These misperceptions contribute to ideas that illegal immigration or lack of citizenship are the biggest barriers Latinos face today.

There are significant areas where misconceptions about the Latino workforce can be corrected:

- More than 75 percent of Americans believe Latino immigrants have a lot to offer this country and are an economic boost (Asian, 87 percent; Black, 85 percent; white, 76 percent).



- Many non-Latinos also believe undocumented immigrants are taking jobs Americans depend on (Asian, 55 percent; white, 53 percent; Black, 49 percent), though undocumented immigrants make up only 13 percent of all Latinos in the United States.

- The view that Latinos are farmworkers is prevalent, even among Latinos, who believe half of Latinos fit that description. A commonly held misperception is that “farmworker”

describes more Latinos than “entrepreneurial or business-minded,” despite U.S. Latinos creating the most small businesses in the country over the last 10 years.

There are positive signs of intercultural cooperation, but major opportunities exist for more accurate learning between groups:

- More than 60 percent of non-Latinos feel they know Latinos enough to work together

er on common causes (white, 68 percent; Black, 66 percent; Asian, 63 percent).

- More than 60 percent of non-Latinos personally interact with Latinos on a regular basis, and more than 80 percent have relationships with Latinos in a variety of social or professional settings.

- Despite personal relationships and frequent contact, only about half of Americans believe Latinos share their values, even among Latinos themselves (Latino, 57 percent; Black, 56 percent; white, 53 percent; Asian, 48 percent). At the same time, family-orientedness, belief in the American Dream and religiousness are the traits most commonly attributed to Latinos, and more than half of Latinos are also viewed as optimistic and experiencing discrimination.

Latinos themselves—especially business leaders and community-based organizations—can lead on correcting misconceptions:

- After Latinos that people personally know, whites and Latinos say their next-most trusted messengers for opinions about this group are Latino business leaders (30 percent and 33 percent) and community-based organizations (30 percent and 34 percent).

For more detail on the above findings, as well as findings about national patterns of media consumption related to Latinos, visit latinodonorcollaborative.org.

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US Employees Want Greater Focus on DEI

Late last year it was reported that more than 2,000 CEOs in the U.S. have now signed a pledge to act on supporting a more inclusive workplace for millions of employees across the nation. However, new findings from the Advanced 2021/22 Trends Report show that 74% of employees believe the main focus of their organization is on business growth and development and not Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI).

Disappointingly for many, the findings from the report showed that only half (51%) of respondents believed that improving D&I is a business priority over the next 12 months.

THE AGE DIVIDE

The report, which surveyed more than 250 employees from companies across the U.S., highlights a disconnect between generations. Only a quarter (25%) of 18–24-year-olds believed that the leadership of their organization is prioritizing inclusion and diversity at all levels, compared to almost half of those (45%) in senior roles.

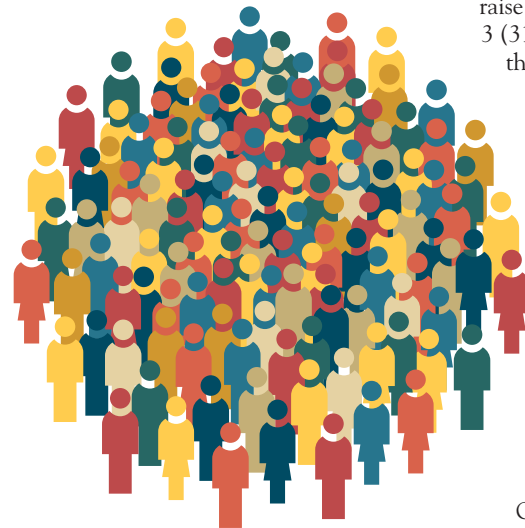
The research findings also indicated that younger employees are much more likely to be aware of the steps being taken to address diversity and inclusion within the organization. In fact, 100% of respondents surveyed in the

18-24 age bracket say they do know whether their company publishes a diversity pay gap report, while a fifth (20%) of those over 55 did not know.

THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT, DESPITE SLOW PROGRESS

Despite these bleak numbers, employees are overwhelmingly positive about the outlook for D&I in the U.S., with 84% saying that their company is taking the proper steps towards creating a more diverse workforce. Encouragingly, 74% say that their organization has undertaken specific actions to reduce unconscious bias in the workplace while another 74% of businesses have also introduced a process for reducing unconscious bias.

Gordon Wilson, CEO at Advanced, said, “Diversity and inclusion can no longer be ignored, and we must act now to ensure that these issues are addressed. Time and time again, we have seen that inclusive workplaces are better for people and better for business. Those organizations that deprioritize their focus on D&I will suffer irreparably as they lose out on opportunities to find and source the best talent, innovate and uncover new products and services, and hamper their post-COVID recovery.”



raise the visibility of minority groups, and 1 in 3 (31%) say hybrid working has highlighted the need to cater to workers with disabilities.

Gordon concluded, “Like many businesses, Advanced is on a journey to improve its D&I. We have made significant progress, but still more must be done within our organization and on an industry-wide level. To achieve diverse, thriving, and successful workplaces, businesses need to walk their walk and implement processes and policies that create an equitable and inclusive landscape. We must all continue to push forward to create lasting change.”

COVID HAS BROUGHT THE ISSUE FRONT AND CENTER

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, many organizations moved to hybrid working and the research shows that many believe this has clarified where more needs to be done to create a more diverse workforce. In fact, 28% of those surveyed say that hybrid working has helped

Other key findings from the report include:

- 8% of 18–24-year-olds say D&I focus is an important attribute for business leaders, and this figure jumps to 44% for those aged 35-44.
- Younger people are more focused on ESG (42%), CSR (42%), and wellbeing (58%).
- 92% of those aged 18-24 report that their business is doing enough to promote D&I.

The full report is available at oneadvanced.com/trends.



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Gender Diversity Report Finds Female M&A Dealmakers Excelled in Pandemic

SS&C Technologies Holdings, Inc. last year announced the publication of the Gender Diversity & Dealmaking 2022 report, an in-depth look at gender diversity in M&A deal-making drawing on data from more than 11,000 M&A deals spanning over a decade.

“Since our first report on the topic published in early 2020, a pandemic and a turn toward ESG and DEI have transformed corporate strategies,” said Ken Bisconti, co-head, SS&C Intralinks. “We set out to determine the extent to which gender diversity on public company boards and at CEO levels affects outcomes in M&A deals. What we found is women CEOs not only complete more deals, but gender diversity produces better long-term performance.”

The report was produced in association with the M&A Research Centre (MARC) at Bayes Business School, City, University of London and Mergermarket.

Key findings from the Gender Diversity & Dealmaking 2022 report:

- Female CEOs complete 97 percent of

announced deals compared to 95 percent for companies with male CEOs. This gap widened to five percentage points for deals completed during the pandemic

- Diverse Boards and female CEOs produce better results post-deal than their male counterparts across key indicators such as price performance, ROE, EBIT/sales and EBITDA/sales
- Acquisitions undertaken by acquirers

with female CEOs and more than 30 percent female representation on boards are more likely to seek advice, are more risk-averse and tend to seek out targets with stronger performance metrics, compared to those conducted by male CEOs or less diverse boards

- Female leaders and diverse boards performed better during the pandemic, with share prices performing better than ones led by male

CEOs one year after transaction completion

SS&C Intralinks is a pioneer of the virtual data room, enabling and securing the flow of information by facilitating M&A, capital raising and investor reporting. SS&C Intralinks has executed over U.S. \$34.7 trillion worth of financial transactions on its platform.

SS&C is a global provider of services and software for the financial services and healthcare industries. Founded in 1986, SS&C is headquartered in Windsor, Connecticut, and has offices around the world. Some 18,000 financial services and healthcare organizations, from the world's largest companies to small and mid-market firms, rely on SS&C for expertise, scale and technology.

This new report draws on data from more than 11,000 M&A deals announced between 2010 and 2021 and features commentary from senior dealmakers to understand the trend.

The full report can be downloaded at: intralinks.com/gender-diversity-and-dealmaking-2022



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Inclusion is the Key to Curb the Female Employee Exodus

Throughout the pandemic, women quit their jobs at significantly higher rates than men, largely exacerbated by the levels of burnout in women across the workforce. As part of Bain & Company's study last year, *The Fabric of Belonging: How to Weave an Inclusive Culture*, the firm surveyed more than 4,500 women—in seven different countries and across all levels of their organizations—to learn about how they think and feel about inclusion in the workplace. The firm found that, on average, only 25% of women feel fully included in the workplace.

A focus on inclusion is necessary to creating a meaningful difference in attracting and retaining women workers across industries. According to Bain's new research, women who feel fully included are 11 times more likely than those who do not to be promoters of their companies, a key indicator of employee engagement and company results. On the flip side, women who feel excluded at work are three times more likely to quit than those who feel included in the workplace. Additionally, the firm found that inclusion is an integral part of successfully recruiting women, with more than 60% of the

women in Bain's sample citing an inclusive environment as important in a new job—as well as for retaining them.

"Inclusion is one of the most important factors in hiring, engaging and retaining women in the workplace," said Bianca Bax, partner in Bain & Company's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion practice. "To weather the impacts of the Great Resignation, it is critical for employers to get a deep understanding of their organization's talent—in this case women—by listening to their stories and incorporating the nuances to increase their feelings of inclusion and, in turn, enabling them to thrive."

Some of the specific behavioral enablers that increase inclusion for women—at least more than for men—include empathy, and open and honest communications. To further understand the most successful change efforts needed to improve inclusion and foster gender equity in the workplace, Bain has outlined a clear path for organizations to overcome complexity:

1. Start with C-level commitments to making these improvements. This includes spearheading the case for change, ensuring that the

'Inclusion is one of the most important factors in hiring, engaging and retaining women in the workplace.'

leadership team, and eventually the whole organization, understand the value to be unlocked by advancing gender equity.

2. Understand intersectionality and apply intersectional lenses to data about your organization. Companies must look past women as a whole, and instead, look at specific groups of women through additional intersectional lens, taking into consideration other factors such as race or ethnicity, geography, and tenure or place in the organization. This will reveal what actions will most effectively increase inclusion for the various groups within the greater group of women employees.

3. Focus on behaviors that increase inclusion for women employees generally. Companies should embrace the value of growth opportunities and feedback for all, train leadership and others to recognize biases, sponsor women throughout the organization and show them clear career paths.

"Some industries, such as financial services, are severely lagging behind on their path towards inclusion for women, with 43% of women in financial services having experienced inappropriate language, insults or bullying in the workplace," said Nishma Gosrani, partner in Bain & Company's Financial Services practice. "These industries, in particular, should use the progress made to date as further momentum for the path ahead, increasing inclusion for their women employees that will help create broader gender equity in society overall."

Information for this article was provided by Bain & Company, a global consultancy that helps the world's most ambitious change makers define the future. To learn more, visit bain.com.



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Support for Diversity in Space-Related Programs

Universities Space Research Association (USRA) has launched a unique partnership between the U.S. Space Force and the Air Force Research Laboratory to advance scientific and technical research at seven selected universities. The University Consortium Research Opportunity (UCRO) announcement signifies the beginning of a critical partnership between USSF and AFRL that connects government with academic research.

According to Bernard Seery, senior vice president, USRA Technology Research and Development, "UCRO represents an incredibly unique opportunity for USRA to support the research efforts of an array of institutions, that will effectively advance the scientific and technical prowess of both USSF and AFRL. Importantly, these established partnerships will also engage a diverse group of students and postdoctoral fellows in research that contributes to an increased understanding and appreciation for STEM workforce opportunities within both agencies."

USRA administers the UCRO to:

- Link the USSF and AFRL with academia through the advancement of university-based research that addresses risks and other areas of scientific interest to secure long-term partnerships;

- Improve research collaboration efforts between USSF, AFRL, and institutions of higher education to contribute and advance meaningful scientific research; and

- Provide undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral fellows with authentic research opportunities, in collaboration with USSF and AFRL, that increase interest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) careers of the future.

The expert management of this workforce development program leverages USRA's knowledge and proficiency, given its proven track record in STEM education and administration of other educational programs, to foster a stronger working partnership with the USSF and AFRL in the future.

Dr. Amanda Smith Hackler, USRA director of education, stated, "USRA's role administering UCRO will enable institutions to generate pertinent research critical to both USSF and AFRL. The research yielded will unquestionably support the mission of both agencies and will encourage interest in USSF and AFRL among the next generation of STEM professionals."

Founded in 1969, under the auspices of the National Academy of Sciences at the request



of the U.S. Government, the Universities Space Research Association (USRA) is a nonprofit corporation chartered to advance space-related science, technology and engineering. USRA operates scientific institutes

and facilities and conducts other major research and educational programs. It engages the university community and employs in-house scientific leadership, innovative research and development, and project management expertise.

The U.S. Space Force (USSF) and Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) established the University Consortium Research Opportunity (UCRO) to engage students and postdoctoral fellows in space-based research and development to increase the number and diversity of future space professionals. This is a new approach to leverage university research and advancement to solve critical USSF and AFRL technical problems. It allows the opportunity to build capacity for space research and innovation at institutes of higher education, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and other designated Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs). The USSF and the UCRO seek to fund university teams committed to developing new and novel solutions to research problems.

More information about USRA is available at usra.edu.

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FDA Takes Key Steps to Increase Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Clinical Trials

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently issued a new draft guidance to industry for developing plans to enroll more participants from underrepresented racial and ethnic populations in the U.S. into clinical trials – expanding on the agency’s previous guidances for industry to improve clinical trial diversity.

“The U.S. population has become increasingly diverse, and ensuring meaningful representation of racial and ethnic minorities in clinical trials for regulated medical products is fundamental to public health,” said FDA commissioner Robert M. Califf, MD. “Going forward, achieving greater diversity will be a key focus throughout the FDA to facilitate the development of better treatments and better ways to fight diseases that often disproportionately impact diverse communities. This guidance also further demonstrates how we support the Administration’s Cancer Moonshot goal of addressing inequities in cancer care, helping to ensure that every community in America has access to cutting-edge cancer diagnostics, therapeutics and clinical trials.”

Despite having a disproportionate burden for certain diseases, racial and ethnic minorities are frequently underrepresented in biomedical research. Clinical trials provide a crucial base of evidence for evaluating whether a medical product is safe and effective; therefore, enrollment in clinical trials should reflect the diversity of the population that is ultimately going to use the treatment. It is known that biological differences exist in how people respond to certain therapies. For example, variations in genetic coding can make a treatment more or less toxic for one racial or ethnic group than another. These variations can also make drugs like antidepressants and blood-pressure medications less effective for certain groups.

This draft guidance, “Diversity Plans to Improve Enrollment of Participants from Underrepresented Racial and Ethnic Subgroups in Clinical Trials,” recommends that sponsors of medical products develop and submit a Race and Ethnicity Diversity Plan to the agency early in clinical development, based on a framework outlined in the guidance.

Barriers to participation among racial and

ethnic groups may include mistrust of the clinical research system due to historical abuses, aspects of the trial design such as inadequate recruitment and retention efforts, frequency of study visits, time and resource constraints for participants, transportation and participation conflicting with caregiver or family responsibilities. In addition, language and cultural differences, health literacy, religion, limited access within the health care system and a lack of awareness and knowledge about what a clinical trial is and what it means to participate may impact clinical trial participation among racial and ethnic minority populations.

The FDA remains committed to increasing enrollment of diverse populations in medical product and drug development and will continue to engage with federal partners, medical product manufacturers, healthcare professionals and health advocates to reach this important goal.

To support the FDA’s efforts to advance diverse participation, the Office of Minority Health and Health Equity created the “Diversity in Clinical Trials Initiative,” which includes an ongoing public education and outreach

campaign to help address some of the barriers preventing diverse groups from participating in clinical trials. Barriers to participation are addressed through a variety of culturally and linguistically tailored strategies, tools and resources such as: educational materials in multiple languages, a dedicated webpage with public service announcements and videos, social media outreach and ongoing stakeholder engagement, collaborations and partnerships.

Last year, the Biden Administration revived the Cancer Moonshot initiative to further expand cancer prevention, detection, research and patient care efforts across the federal government. The FDA Commissioner serves as a member of the White House Cancer Cabinet, comprised of departmental agencies and components organized to develop a unified strategy in the fight against the disease. One of the goals of the Cancer Moonshot is to address inequities in access to cancer screening, diagnostics and treatment across race, gender, region and resources.

Learn more at [fda.gov](https://www.fda.gov).

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Mintz is proud to be recognized in the **Company of the Year category** of the *Los Angeles Business Journal’s* **2023 Diversity, Inclusion + Equity Awards.**

Congratulations to all of the award recipients and nominees!



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